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THE GORDON LESTER FORD
COLLECTION
FROM EMILY E. F. SKEEL
IN MEMORY OF
ROSWELL SKEEL, JR.
AND THEIR FOUR PARENTS

MY RECREATIONS.

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VERSES

BY

EMILY E. FORD.

6041

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY HURD AND HOUGHTON.
The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass.
1872.
K.B.F.

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TO THE PUBLIC.

I AM no poet, and I know it.
But if a wild bloom lingers
Within my loving fingers,
From the woods I joyful bring it;
In my sweet friend's lap I fling it.
Can you blame me that I show it?

I am no poet, and I know it.
But if distant mellow horn,
Clarion note of early morn,
Breaks sweet silence with a thrill,
Which an echo rouses, still
Can you blame me, if I blow it?

I am no poet, and I know it.
But a robin's homely note,
Joyful gushing from his throat
Though no semblance of a tune,
Adds a charm to leafy June.
My rude song, must I forego it?

To

HERE is a tiny cabinet, my friend!
I've gathered all it holds with loving pains.
There are some ancient coins with green rust stains,
A few dried plants, — and you may condescend
This orichalcum ring to notice. Here is head
Of Venus from Apelles' picture. There gay tread
The Hours on porcelain, and here you see
Some Indian arrowheads. These, small crystals are;
But none in shape are perfect, some flaws mar
The very best. This broken, antique chain —
Three whole lives' histories within its links remain.
Here are some sea flowers from rock island's lea,
And there some colored sketches, bad and good,
And photographs of field and hill and flood.
Perhaps for love of me, my own dear friend,
Some idle afternoon with them you'll spend.

To ———.

Ah roses, the gift of true lover,
Ah lilies, the crown of true saint,
Ah vine leaves, for pleasure's gay rover,
Ah bay leaves, the strength of hearts faint!—

If twining you all in one wreathing,
Love human and heavenly in one,
All joys of our mortal life breathing,
In sunshine of Fame's golden sun,

I gladly this garland down throwing
At feet of a mortal would say,
"This wreath take, 'Tis but my just-owing,—
'Tis only my debts I now pay.

"For thee has this chaplet been growing,
For thee the bright sunbeams were caught;
You reap what for years you've been sowing,
You inherit these treasures unbought."

VERSES OF THOUGHT.

To R. W. H.

PROCESS.

PROCESS — is slow or fast advance,
A word of wide significance.
The chemist, thinker, judge *proceed;*
The smelter, forgeman, *process* lead;
The flux, the furnace, *product* cede.
Process is path and road to end,
Success or failure with it blend;
To watch a process is to please
Brave, worthy curiosity,
And so fulfill God's wise decrees,
Though never we its steps may try.

In every process there is set
A joy that fills and does not fret,
The color shines in changeful hue,
Steeped in the texture through and through;
At first we may too anxious be,
And work in "sad sincerity."
Yet pleasure in each process hides —
A subtle joy which on us glides,
And progress, slow or fast, distills
This joy, which does not fret but fills, —
A joy, which grows like ripening fruit,
And every palate seems to suit.
The workman knows it to the full,
He offers us the pear to pull.

The artist feels it, at its best,
Exhilaration, pastime, rest;
But looker-on can love the plan,
Beside creative artisan.
Man's chiefest joy is in pursuing;
His native mood is one of wooing;
To seek, to strive, to know, to share,
That keeps the soul from blank despair.

The child delights to try his skill
At manhood's tools, and with a will
Essays, in eager, bright endeavor,
And fails — to be discouraged, never.
As little cares he for result,
As ancient ram or catapult;
The process is the fascination
And active joy of new creation.
He haunts the shop, the forge, the mill,
His curious eyes alert to fill,
And satisfy his busy brain
With what they each in turn contain.

Youth's heart is ever bent on suing;
Once done, things are not worth the doing;
The careless strength of childhood's hour
Is spendthrift of its golden dower.
To break, to spoil his cunning toy,
Is instinct with the active boy;
To understand its manufacture,
He joys in every compound fracture.
The workman who on statues' plinth
Carves out the slumberous hyacinth,
In greater force can feel the spell
Of manufacturing swift and well.

The sculptor lost in dream intense,
Or fiery spasm of the sense,
Models the statue in the clay,
Knows well the joy of work at play.
The artist studying without stint
On fancy's glow or memory's hint,
Whether he reach his utmost scope,
Or limited in vision grope, —
Lost in a mood of endless coil,
Dull rest of unapparent toil, —
Or victor over hand and tool,
His skill dead mechanisms rule, —
Each painter well the rapture knows
That to his daily task he owes.
And outside aliens borrow right
To measure Art's prophetic might,
The artist lends his standpoint clear,
They enter burthenless of fear,
And unawares may see defined
Some glimpses of the artist mind.
The worker's eye to them is lent
That they may guess his best intent;
That Process may in part reveal,
Ere Finish set its signet seal,
And show what novice may discover
With borrowed eyes of faithful lover.

And when the world spun into space
Before Jehovah's beckoning face,
Just as the spoken word of might
Said, into darkness, "Be thou light!"
The sons of God from loftiest sky
Shouted in joyous ecstasy.
Staring at each new planet's birth
Like curious children upon earth,

The sweet grave cherubs eager lie
Along heaven's lustrous balcony.
The bright-winged angels rapturous stood
As o'er this earth God's spirits brood,
Impulsive mid the central calm,
Swelled through heaven's arch Creation's psalm.
Divine activity, a brave unrest,
Which like the wind sweeps through the breast
Till music all abroad is poured,
And fullest life sounds deepest chord.
That offers to each soul defense,
In humble daily diligence,
When one's own power is wholly spent
In other's work to find content;
So no one's life is bare and rude,
Or doomed to utter solitude.
Fresh interest lives in common things,
And vigorous joy from Process springs.

MOODS.

THE lover's cup o'erflows with fancies sweet;
His moods are various as his life is large;
The smile that springs beloved face to greet,
Hides tears his eyes are brimming to discharge.

Sweet beggary and alms of lovers fond!
Favor and grace lie in the smallest things;
True Love but waves his magic wizard wand,
A hut is royal palace — home of kings.

A flower is laden with a perfect blessing,
A look is freighted with a rapture keen,
The eye glance saves the tongue's confessing,
A baptism of glory fills the scene.

I ask and thou dost answer, and thy word
Like gracious dew upon my heart will fall;
Soft thrilling murmur in thy voice is heard,
Like tender cooing of the wood doves' call.

I am a beggar, and thou givest alms;
I am a queen and bounty can bestow;
I sit and rest within thy zone of calms,
And thou to me the constellations show.

Or like Diana, huntress, with her bow,
I glide through mountain passes where I find
The struggle and the victory thou dost know,
And I must follow or be left behind.

O, Love! great glory and great mystic pains;
Heart pierced with pang, and yet if we withdraw
The fatal weapon, life no more remains, —
Dear pain, sad pleasure linked, are thy great law.

FORMS.

FORMS are the hedges of our social life,
To shut out trampers, be they man or beast;
Their value twofold, beauty not the least;
With shelter, highest courtesy is rife,
As glittering shield, amid the battle-strife,
Shaped for tough use, can bravely please the eye.
Hedges exclude no sight of lovely sky,
Nor to the landscape interpose a screen;
They melt into the meadow, orchard, hardly seen,
Save for a slender line of winding green,
That marks of each the fitting boundary.
A friendly refuge they, for birdling's leaf-hid nest!
They teem with blossoms for the welcome guest.
So forms protect our sacred homes and heart,
Yet offer flowers of courtesy to those
Who stay not with us underneath the rose,
But mere saluters in the morning's mart,
Or dwellers in an outside life, from ours apart,
Our limits thus they plainly can define,
Which ground each family claims as mine or thine;
But interdict no beauty, and offer no pretense,
Graceful necessities, society's defense,
Standing in dignity, to stay impertinence.

DREAM-LAND GRAVES.

DREAM-WORLD lies close to every soul;
  Its doors will ope at lightest words
  And thoughts fly in and out like birds,
And build their nests on every knoll.

Each flying thought will rear its brood,
  Each dream-bird hope will build its nest,
  And cover with its plumy breast
Sweet singers who our sight elude.

But O, the graves in dream-land found,
  The buried plans, the hopes so chilled,
  The sealed up tombs with fond loves filled,
The turf heaped up on greenest mound.

Some dream-graves shine with soft sward bright,
  True love still watches o'er its dead.
  Spring roses blossom at the head,
And rainbow sunsets drop their light.

Some dig their graves, and, proud and chill,
  From youth's dear dreams turn with a sneer;
  You never know from them how dear
Were the soft hopes that Time doth kill.

There tender mourners wander long,
And grieve for what they never had;
There glide the groups of heroes glad,
There noiseless chants the poet's song.

There hide the books that ne'er were writ;
There buried in the dream-land mould,
Rust eats the marble statue cold
That never sculptor's tool shall fit.

There little graves of childish hope
Lie close to great sarcophagi,
Where giant plans must buried lie,
And neither more in dream-land grope.

Thus dream-land is so full of graves
You scarce can find a spot to place
A footstep, or you must deface
Some hallowed turf that memory craves.

O, cemetery of dead dreams!
The vastest graveyard earth can show,
Your boundaries no man can know
Till heaven's revealing glory streams.

We then shall reap what we now sow;
No longer wrapt in silence dumb,
Your resurrection then shall come,
With Easter morning's golden glow.

MUSIC.

SOME men the credit to their senses give,
Of all the beauties which in music live.
The senses are the entrance way, and claim the merit
Of avenues to spirit.
The senses are the outside doors, which must unclose
Before the spirit wakens from repose;
To take as food,
In natural, sweet content,
The nourishment
By music lent
To happy, restful mood,
Or sent
To stir the blood
In noble strife,
With warning life.

If one is deaf and dumb,
Silent is then all sound.
Whether, the bee's light hum,
Or thunder's bass, profound,
Or if the countersign, pass-word of music's own,
Be all unknown,
These doors, they never open fly,
Though you should knock until you die:
Knock, with all pains!
The music still shut out remains.

Yet circumstance must rule the dower
And gift of music's hour,
And ignorance will hinder
Even the strains of Pindar;
For education must unlock
The apprehensive power,
With sun and shower,
In floods beneficent,
The natural dullness shock
Of earnest soul on flower intent,
Or upon thorough knowledge bent.

The savage rude
Thinks his own music good,
The wildmen gayly thrum
Upon a beechwood drum!
Nor see the difference
When an artist brings
A Stradivari's magic strings,
And fills the whole air with melody intense.

You never see or smell the rose full-blown
Unless in wholesome soil;
With much of care and toil
The seeds are sown;
The rich ground may be there
And sunlight fill the air,
If all unplanted in their garden bed,
The rose hips hang on bush in winter red —
Therefrom
Will nothing come.
The seed and ground,

And shower and sun
Must be as one,
For growth and beauty to abound.

To him that hath shall still be given,
Is rule of Heaven!
Who is the true inheritor
Of music's mine of unwrought ore?
Her heaped-up gold,
Which is not bought or sold,
And must remain, untold?
Man is his own heir, and only can inherit,
Through inward wealth of merit,
The legacies with which
He maketh music rich.
He dieth to himself,
And all his worldly pelf,
Unused, lays on the shelf,
And wakes in thee, to live,
Thou spirit legatee,
And thou dost to him, give
Brief immortality!

Music is like a glass set in a niche,
The which
Equally saint or sinner dost reflect,
And each one, passing, reads his own aspect.
If a beast pass, he sees
His beastly self; but should an angel look
Upon the glass within the lonely nook,
White draperies floating shine, and waving wings:
The glass his own sweet image backward flings.

The law of melodies
Wisely unto the inner world decrees
That we should take but what we give,
And so derive
Only the happiness for which we strive,
With us exchanging gifts.
Sometimes the flower and perfume of a minute,
Enshrined in restful ease;
Sometimes the Infinite
Spirit of aspiration music holds in it;
Which us endows with larger breath,
And brighter light,
Our motive sifts,
And into worlds far out of sight,
Far beyond death,
With wings of eagle, plumed for flight
To life's best height,
Uplifts.

MEMORY.

A SNOWY vestal-priestess soft and fair
Glides round our childhood's path, and jewels rare
She hoards for our old age. Veiled Prophetess!
Her gathered treasures even in heaven may bless.

The saintly virgin, patient scribe, may write
A book of gospels. Round its margin white
Thick posies bloom, and tints of gold and blue,
And gems upon the cover sparkle true.

Or mystic garden-ground she fills so fair
With graceful blooms and colors sweet and rare,
Her flowers of fragrance or of beauty bright
Are adamantine stones of deathless light.

But she is magic maiden. If we feed
Her with ill food, bad diets surely lead
To evil change. She grows a blear-eyed hag
That picks up scraps and shreds with steps that lag.

Or black harassing cur, or fierce sleuth-hound
Drives off her visits soft and sweet. With bound
It reaches you ; hot breathing at your back
With angry bay, it fastens on your track.

Her altered name in these dread shapes is one
Of saddest portent underneath God's sun ;
If man be hunted down by grim Remorse,
He knows the bitterness of Memory's force.

So as Demeter fed a mortal boy
And breathed upon his sleep ambrosial joy,
And laid him 'neath red coals of fire by night,
So should we nourish Memory with pure light.

So fed, our vestal Priestess, angel bright,
Immortal beauty offers to our sight,
Nor dreadful shape shall threaten us in wrath,
But fairest Memory haunt our evening path.

NATURE'S LESSONS.

Our lives are all mistaken
  If a better future be;
Half asleep, how can we waken
  To its solemn mystery?

If we were only colder,
  Then we should dare to think;
If we were only bolder,
  We should not fear the brink.

We are weighted with a burden
  We must lift with our own hand,
And even the promised guerdon
  We cannot understand.

We are helpless, half with languor,
  And an idle, dreaming life;
We are helpless, half with anger,
  And an unavailing strife.

In our music a sad minor
  Fills the sweetest of our songs,
And a yearning for diviner
  The tender tone prolongs.

True achievement is denied us,
  Yet success we constant crave;
Discontent will vex and chide us,
  Till it sleeps within our grave.

Up and listen to the voices
In the tree-tops gently stirring,
While all nature gay rejoices
In the swallows, darting, whirring.

If you silent stand, and hearken
To the lindens, blossom-laden,
Then no more your thought will darken
With vexed problems, dearest maiden!

Joy blooms in every creature,
God loves it, dearly, surely;
It is his creation's feature;
Joy, then, my sweet heart, purely.

TREACHEROUS SOLITUDE.

O SOLITUDE, beloved maid!
When first I found thee in the shade
Of woodland grove and forest glade,

I thought I loved thee passing well,
To thee my secrets I would tell,
And happy with thee ever dwell;

But soon I learned that wandering streams
Of idle fancies, empty themes,
Wrapt all my life in vagrant dreams.

Sequestered dell I then forsook,
And sought thee in the sheltered nook
Of cloistered library. Thy look

Of clear intelligence, thy smile
Of calm, cold light, my thoughts beguile.
I passionately wooed thee, while

Thou feedest heart and brain with food
Serenely wise, divinely good —
Sweet thoughts that dwell with Solitude.

But now unsatisfied, I trace
Monotony within thy face;
I weary of thy changeless grace.

Narcotic influence from thee flows,
Which first exhilarant rest bestows;
Then comes the rust of long repose.

At first a stimulant you prove,
The secret springs of spirit move,
Life rushes faster in its groove;

But afterward the life you drain,
Stagnation comes to heart and brain,
And no more blessing can we gain.

Enchantress, thy bewildering charm
Takes weapon from our nerveless arm,
Imbrutes us with rank moly's charm.

So Solitude, mysterious maid,
At last we are by thee betrayed;
Of *Circe* we are now afraid.

THE HEARTH FIRE.

Poor banished slave, how long you have been hid
Unseen below bronze register's carved lid ;
Now, dear companion, loosed from prison wall,
You bless our hearth with your brave glow and blaze,
Your iron gyves from off your beauty fall,
Your poet nature all a frolic plays.
See how you swirl and whirl yourself about,
And crackle if you cannot joyous shout;
Your flame is the sweet poetry of fire ;
The heat its use ; on hearth they both conspire
To bless us. Nimble servitor, brave friend,
Your changeful charms delight us without end.
No more dishonored or disgraced you hide,
But smiling, with us joyfully abide.

THE FIRE KING A SERVANT.

O Fire, thy conquering power, and forceful might,
Young nations worshipped, and in eldern days
Fair altars crowned the hill-tops to thy praise.
But half in love they worshipped, half in fright:
Volcanoes terrify, if sun and stars delight.
O Fire God, now to faithful servant turned,
Thy worthiest mission to the world discerned ;
All tamed and gentle, thy wild grace adorns
Sweet limits, which the raging Fire King scorns.
Thy lovely color follows thy dear light and heat,
And adds to use diviner beauty sweet.
So leaning from thy splendid kinghood's height,
Your savage strength takes loveliest disguise,
And sweeter daily grows by sacrifice.

THE POWER OF LOVE.

"Love! magic builder! rear for me a home!"
A stately palace, rose upon my sight—
A citadel, secure in towering might,
And yet a temple, in whose august dome
Worship and reverence shed a holy light;
And then a cottage, hid in gardens green,
Where gold-eyed amaranths 'gainst lilies lean,
And truth, and peace, and innocence unite.
Wise architect! who hath the power to bring
In union different spirits, each a noble king.
Beauty and strength and deathless holiness,
And household life, and humble blessedness!
Is not thy potency, a thing divine?
Giving us here on earth, celestial shrine,
Where, in the darkest hours by sorrow sent,
The heart may shelter find, and sweet content.

THE WEAKNESS OF LOVE.

Strange are the contradictions of poor human love!
So brave it seems, so full of conscious power,
As if it longed to meet the trial hour,
And its indwelling virtue nobly prove.
With lance and helm, and glittering maiden shield,
Like some Joan of Arc, or Launcelot de Lake,

For king or queen the gauntlet eager take,
  And mounting wear their colors to the field.
But king will, in her keenest need forsake
  The humble maid who for him risked her all;
Queen Guinevere, once faithless to her lord, will make
  A wanton mistress — sin's most easy thrall.
O, love! thy wondrous strength is not our great surprise,
But the imperfect weakness which within thee lies!

THE REPROOF.

O, MERRY wooer, leave thy hoarded jest,
  Thy armory of "quips and wreathed smiles,"
  Lay by thy graceful trifling for a while,
Put serious earnest feeling to the test;
Giving thy weary wits a welcome rest,
  Let thought and sentiment the time beguile.
  Sport is the wreath upon the capital,
The pillar's solid majesty to crown.
But pillars built of wreaths would crumble down
  With their own weight. So, fading, on us fall
  The flowery columns of thy Palace Hall.
Wit is thine enemy, — upon it frown;
Or thou, blind Samson, at thy foe's proud call,
Shroudest thyself in an inglorious pall.
O man of strength, who might lift Gaza's gate,
And quell Philista's power, shun Samson's fate!

THE REPLY.

Life needs its play and love its varied phase ;
The bended bow wears out with constant strain ;
And feeling, sharpened into arrowy pain,
Frays the tense heart and spends its strength in vain.
Engrossing passion dulling, droops, decays
Or cumbers with its load the aching brain ;
Its sluggish stream moves turbidly along,
While mountain torrent glitters on its way ;
The merry sunshine leaps within its spray,
Which, bounding, bubbling, trickles liquid song ;
The foam that floats upon the reddening glass
Proclaims its force and vigorous overflow ;
So frolic's effervescence does but show
The life and brilliance of love's wine. Alas !
For stagnant souls, love's fantasies who blame,
And call its vital vehemence but shame !

ABSENCE.

Hail to thee, Absence ! Friendship's touch and test !
Thou art abused as Love's destroying foe.
But little of thine office do they know
Who call thee thus. Idealist, the best —
Delightful Fancy is thy constant guest,
And flowers and fragrance showers at thy behest.

If sound the heart, and fibred strong and true,
The loves of years thou ever dost renew,
Casting the sad away, and hoarding all the rest.
From daily sight, beloved ones lie concealed
Within thy clear obscure. Owe we thee hate,
When sundered from all ill, there stand revealed
The hidden glories thou dost indicate?
Vanish friends' outward forms — if fresh and fair
Their memories vital blossom in thy air!

SHARING.

A joy came to me which I hid
Within my soul;
I did not know that God me bid
Divide the whole.

I hid it, but it waned and pined
With slow decay;
I did not know 'twas half designed
To give away.

Another joy came to me which
I freely shared;
I found it doubling. I grew rich
The more I spared.

I took the lesson to me sent:
All wealth possest
Increases in the spending; spent
Is laid up best.

LANGUAGE.

EACH man, at birth is given a magic cloak,
Which shrinks or stretches to his proper size.
Some walk in samite white, some rags disguise,
Some wear fool's motley, patched with stalest joke,
And some put on the poisoned cloak of lies,
And some a garment choose of wind and smoke.
Though each charmed cloak man's natural parts befits,
Yet he may add to it with anxious pains,
Till it becomes expression for wise brains,
And size and splendor, for the cloak, he gains.
See, forth walk cloth of velvet, cloth of frieze,
Both worn alike, with equal air of ease,
While richest cloth of gold may us displease ;
For sumptuous pomp and pride cloud bravest wits.
Ah, Language! dress and cloak of thought, thy bravery
Sometimes will cover meanest knavery,
Yet thy weird power binds us in happy slavery.
Through thee alone each man his neighbor knows;
Thou art a sword, a tool, a chalice, or sweet rose ;
Thy riches we are powerless to confess,
And silence often takes thy power to bless:
Thy poverty, sometimes, affects us more
Than all the splendors which thou hast in store.

BAD AND GOOD HABITS.

O, TWO-FACED wonder to our childhood's eyes ;
With double hands and arms, and single head !
A terror unexprest, a mystery dread
Glooms in one face ; foul-eyed, with lids that rise
In dull, slow gaze ; foul-lipped, with savage jaw,
The wretched beldame sat, her cruel claw
Clanking a heavy chain. What wild surmise
Told us Bad Habit was her name ! Relentless power
She sways o'er all her subjects ; bitter cup
She gives to drink, and makes them drink it up.
Unerring, tracks them ; in her conquered train
They, writhing, struggle with her iron chain,
And wear her yoke, with ever-growing pain.
She yields no freedom ! All their anguish vain ;
Though they may wring their hands, and curse the hour
When first her ill-conditioned face did on them lower.

A welcome look shines on the other face ;
Her beckoning hands attract us to her side ;
Her mouth seems made to praise, and not to chide ;
She holds herself with easy, natural grace ;
Her robes are all unstained, and smooth and white,
And her train gleams with silver-lustre bright.
Her chain is wove of golden flexile lace,
With lilies set ; although it seems but light
To draw such heavy weights, yet in its might
It mounts to Heaven, drags mountain from its place,
Welds linked armor for a desperate fight.

Thy sister Sorceress weaves her wicked spell,
And knots and twists its tangles round us;
But thou, Enchantress, with no shames confound us;
Sweet are the steadfast charms with which thou'st bound us;
Age and experience all their virtues swell.
Perhaps we love thy bonds, strong Habit, but too well;
Yet with our chosen Queen we would forever dwell.

COLOR IN VOICE.

TO ANTOINETTE STERLING.

My friend, thou dost show forth the equal laws
Of sound and color which are near akin.
Thou canst express the feeling soul within
By tones which paint as well sing, nor pause
In thy deep work to only one tone win,
Though rich and sweet and pure that might have been.
Thy melody aspires to breathe the tone
Which shades each song with color just its own,
And each new air to tint with its fit hue
And flush or blanch with tingings sweet and true.
Thy voice pales into ghostly gray, then flings
A rosy light, or gold and green it sings,
Or trumpet red with scarlet peal out-rings,
Or solemn black wraps round funereal pall,
Or elf-bells sound through forest dim their call, —
Thy voice has color clear to tint them all.

TRUTH, NO ENEMY.

ALL hail the men who think and search!
Science is not a foe of church!
The truth is safer than all else,
In its brave fire all falsehood melts.

God sends us down divinest facts,
We find them in fresh science' tracks;
These revelations from below,
Are the elect of God, I know.

They seem to fight with old beliefs;
But wasted are these timid griefs.
Meet them without a hope or fear,
If truth, they always will work clear.

The Truth, it is the Way, the Life;
Truth is the bright weapon for the strife.
Faith is the bright day's living force,
Doubt is the groping of night's course.

Doubt is the dream's uncertainty,
Faith is the open conscious eye;
We dully sleep through doubt's dull hours,
We work in day's rejoicing powers.

We never circumstance create
Nor can we always dominate;
The common, primal element,
Oft is far enough from clement.

Rule well thyself! then Nature scan,
She yields her secrets to wise man;
Nor is she with herself at war;
Who will not trust her doth her mar.

Then study in God's natural book,
Its truth no rivalry will brook;
Nor with the Scripture — word of life —
Will enter into useless strife.

FLIRTING.

How those sweet children in their plays
Put on our costumes, ape our ways;
They mock our manners, take our name,
And well they act their little game.

They are not trying to deceive;
They know they only "make believe."
And that gay girl, and bright young man,
Are flirting on the self-same plan.

They play they're lovers; 'tis a part
Of plenteous fancy, idle heart.
Their wit exuberant flows so free,
Its frolic craves activity.

Too happy are they even to think
Of fun's foam chalice they will drink;
When life's grave purposes begin,
This vital force will help them win.

Young Love meanwhile lies hid in dreams,
In deepest sleep unconscious seems ;
Perhaps sometimes a roguish shake
Starts the boy-beauty half awake.

Yet as the breezy winds may play
About the flower buds all the day,
Yet never coax one bud to show
Its inner heart of fragrant glow,

So the young buds of life's best rose
At flirting jokes do not unclose ;
Fire-works with worship do not glow,
Nor password to Love's shrine can know.

The shaking winds perfect the flower
Helped into beauty by fun's dower ;
But the strong Sun, the heavenly King,
To blossoms nature's openings bring.

And when the Sun-god sends his light
To dye the cups with color bright,
The glad buds open and ne'er know,
That, folded up, they frolicked so.

Some weakling blooms these winds shake down,
That never wear their perfect crown ;
They're worth no sorrow, howe'er small,
When they so lightly whirl and fall.

MORNING DIVINITY.

SERENE Intelligences make
  Their home in morning's golden shrine:
At day dawn when we joyful wake,
  We meet their presence all divine.

The slumbering earth now wet with dew,
  Smiles in its dreams, like sleeping child;
Just vanished from our eager view,
  The wood-gods chant their chorus wild.

Their voiceless tune is in the air,
  In yonder forest yet it floats;
And breathing music shining fair,
  Each brook still babbles forth their notes.

At rapturous dawn so still and bright,
  The listening gods control our speech.
Thought moves elastic, strong and light,
  And height and depth at once may reach.

We then may know what poets sing,
  We then may feel like heroes true;
Aurora's children she will bring,
  The power to know, the wish to do.

Dull stone, so hard and cold by day, —
  Like Memnon's statue, — at sunrise,
Aurora's rosy, ambient ray,
  Wakes light and life, within our eyes.

We see, we sing, and know the gods:
O could we keep perpetual morn
Within each soul which droops and nods
And only wakes with day reborn,—

If atmosphere of dewy light,
Could bathe our lives like morning sun,
And breathe a force of subtle light,
Which round our pathway broad should run!

The morning wind forever blows,
If Godlike thoughts we keep anear;
Creation's poem ever flows
To him who lists with willing ear.

NATURE'S RETICENCE.

GROWTH in silence comes, by night,
Safe from human ken or sight.
In elemental calm of mien,
Nature holds herself serene;
Shunning strife, and vain alarm,
Folded up away from harm,
In shadows deep, and corners sly,
She works in conscious mystery.
Hid away in silence dumb,
All things to perfection come;
Noiseless in the sullen ground
Crystals clear their beauteous round.
Lozenge, trapezoid, or rhomb,
Slow accrete in earthly tomb.
Opals steal their subtle fire,
Carbuncle, its flameful ire,

Metals drop their liquid gleam,
Underneath the rushing stream.
Silently the oak-trees rise,
Stretching upward to the skies.
Who hath ever seen unclose
Central heart of perfumed rose,
Or the star which in its course
Out of all things gathering force,
Silently through mighty space,
Sweeps in curves of matchless grace.
Flowering life in its repose
Is the babe which sleeping grows;
Noiseless as a secret thought,
Strength and purpose to it brought.
Flushing rose and amber light,
Aurora, voiceless floods the night;
Skyey splendors, tongues of flame,
High noon of color wide proclaim, —
While these wonders flit and fly,
Noontide silence rules the sky.
Nature works in sweet composure;
Completion is her best disclosure.
In natural willing sympathy,
Quiet the growing soul must lie,
Open to her influence high;
Rain and wind, and sunshine bright,
Lend their power and wholesome light.
Passive, let the Universe,
Of its wealth to it disburse.
Steeped in bygone years, amid
Present joys and griefs, are hid,
Where none can know, and none can spy,
Each soul's growth and destiny.

ACHIEVEMENT.

BEHIND that mountain top, where I am bidden
Never to go,
Lies the great world of golden sunset hidden
I long to know.

Might I by toiling climb up that low mountain,
Then would I see
Cloud colors' radiant source and secret fountain,
No mystery.

Ah child! if your light eager footsteps climbing,
Should gain that height,
The vanished sunset, far-off distance lining,
Still cheats your sight.

For all around, between, beyond your dreaming
The mountains spread,
Hill tops thrust up their grim, gray outlines, seeming
Like giants dead.

In after-life, we toil up some rock summit,
Only to know
How many more such peaks we may see from it,
Unknown below.

Each conquered Alp reveals a host of others,
And paths are long;
We only climb a little higher than our brothers,
By effort strong.

To see and know the limits of achievement,
Is best of all.
Victories are but balanced, by bereavement,
We are Time's thrall.

And all the end of life's best gifts and favor,
Proves us most weak.
Of wisdom's bloom we hardly catch a savor,
Though painfully we seek.

DRAMATIC POWER.

TO ADELAIDE PHILLIPPS.

My friend is Queen of Romance-land's high realms.
The gypsy mother lifts her wild sad strain,
Her chants barbaric throb with poignant pain,
And thrill us with her motherhood's refrain,
Till feeling floods our soul and grief o'erwhelms.
Then frolics arch Rosina of Seville,
So roguish, merry singing her sweet will,
Her airy fantasies our visions fill,
While her rich tones our happy senses thrill.
Or Leonora pours her grief and shame
In mingled song of dropping tears and flame.
Most human are the moods your voice can bring!
Most natural the hearts whose woes you sing!
The picturesque, instinctive you display,
And weave a magic web with action gay,
And rapid shuttle gesture's shifting ray,
And sympathetic souls confess your sway,
For pictures strong you draw in black and white,
And with bold crayon-work our taste delight.

MUSIC.

O COMPLEX art! embracing all the spheres!
How high thy head doth tower above thy peers.
In sharpest, coldest science, stand thy feet,
And mathematic laws, defined, complete,
Construct of iron strong thy frame severe,
Or build thy walls of fairest glass so clear.
Thy loftiest dome is lost in farthest air,
Where the lark's song floats off in silence fair;
Where its white dazzle melts in whiter light,
And only soul and thought could follow flight.
Yet distilled flowers perfume thy Temple's height,
And born in creatures sweet, thy brightest notes
Delicious drop from out the gay birds' throats.
Hidden in brass, the metals own thy sway,
The senseless wood is wrought thy notes to play,—
Through nature's realm, in each thing, deep inheres
Rhythms revealed to gods, and godlike seers,
Who move the human soul with song and lyre
Till dull life kindles into spirit fire;
The flame burns out the dross, the gold refines,
Till the dim sheath that hides the weapon shines.
The cumbering body unconsciously is worn,
And into spirit-air and light the soul is born.
Thought like a stag-hound leaps to run its race,
Full of heroic life and wild untiring grace.
Within thy lulling charm of tender, dreamy sound,
Lost in thy sweetest rest, repose profound,
Gray, haggard Grief, and cankering Care relax
Their jailer watch, their endless drain and tax,

And Jealousy forgets its bitter food:
And Envy leaves her pallid, treacherous brood,
And humble, reverent praise our spirits fill,
Obedient to thy potent, blessed will.

The Pagan creed of dangerous delight
Is vanished from our world of better sight;
No siren haunts the shore for wind-bound ships,
No mermaid's luring voice woos to her lips,
No Lorelei chants to rocks her magic lay,
Combing her sea-green locks, in mystic play;
But kneeling at thy Art's transparent shrine,
We own thy impulse, human and divine.
Perhaps on earth thy promise is abused, —
This is the only Art we know in heaven is used;
The angels sing their perfect love and joy,
In Paradise immortal powers employ
Music, that vapid souls deem but a toy.
Beethoven, deaf to common sound, with spirit ear,
Caught echoes ringing from this heaven-born sphere;
And Mozart's cheerful, tender, candid soul,
O'er human sympathies sways sweet control;
Rossini takes the world of happy sense,
And wraps it round with melody intense.
Imperial Handel draws his vigorous bow,
And solemn, massive melodies outflow;
Schubert, instinctive, sounds life's saddest wail —
Shadows of Tragedy, in silence pale,
Gloom in clear dark, moonlight illuminate;
And Schumann sings, in love's gay bloom elate,
Or dreams in harmony, prophetic fate.
O masters great! ye are true priests and kings,
Ye glorify all matter; Life's meanest things
Grow beautiful when Music waves her wings.

How can I worthy praise this greatest Art,
Which holds the throne, in centre of my heart,
Which weaves its conscious charm from out one sense,
Clothing the Universe with splendor dense,
Wiping out time and change, and sorrow's power,
In blinding happiness of music's hour.
In science grounds its mysteries bright and clear,
Yet knows each deepest source of human tear.
Enthroned upon thy followers' central heart,
Thou mak'st for them a hidden life apart.
A trembling student of thy holy face,
I ask within thy courts some humble place,
And borrowing from thee keen inspiring force,
Boldly I trace thee to thy spirit source.
Apollo, Orpheus, with their subtle dowers,
Were hints of heavenly gifts of heavenly powers.

HONOR, THE FLOWER OF HONESTY.

O HONESTY, thou tough, brave virtue of the soul,
Whose iron fibres build safe bridge 'twixt man and man,
For worthy use, can doting dullard plan
A life without thee? In thy wise control
Move order, plenty, and a duteous train
Of civic virtues. Without thee, bitter pain!
Dark treachery stabs us! Faith in heart and brain
Dies out! Distrust creeps in, with endless dole,
And blinded, rayless eyes, like groping mole.
But fairer is thy daughter than her sire,
Bright Honor, with her soul of lucent fire.

As rough Paulonias' sturdy, gnarled boughs,
When spring's first-stirring life doth in them rouse
The vital juice, burst out in spiciest bloom,
So, Flower of Honesty, thy radiance doth illume
Thy rugged Sire, and potent thy perfume
Which crowns his vigorous head. He gives thee dower
Of robust strength, and generous, vital power;
Thy blossoming adorns his baldness, beauteous flower!

POEMS.

Some poems are like nuts; green rind you strip,
Then the hard shell you crack to find the meat.
Like nutmegs some, whose outside mace is sweet,
And kernel-spice high flavored and complete.
And some are pomegranates, mixed pulp and pip.
There are persimmons, pungent, puckering fruit;
Hard frost must ripen them ere taste they suit.
Some are like dogwood blooms with calyx bright,
But seed corollas dull and greenly white.
Some jonquils are, hidden in withered sheath,
Where bright buds lurk, the mask of death beneath.
Some, mesereon-mites of tiny bloom,
Bright glints of thought, dull, leafless stems illume.
Some shine like statue carved, and some like rose,
Which color, perfume, shape, perfection shows.

THE BURDEN OF FAME.

Ah ! who would sigh for golden Fame ?
It hinders clear consummate sight,
It scorches when it blazes bright,
And brands its scars of careless blame.

The flint, when struck, gives out its spark ;
So critics make an author's fame,
And genius kindles into flame
By blows that leave their bruising mark.

The light which streams in golden line
Shows thick the dust so dim and dead :
When praise falls on the author's head
Its sunbeams make some motes to shine —

That left in quiet darkness, might
Have never to the world been shown,
They are revealed by light alone,
And but for praise had found no sight.

The bay leaves crushed give out their scent :
That woodland freshness soft and mild.
Their tattered garlands, dust defiled,
Are rarely wreaths that bring content.

The bay leaves grace the lonely lanes ;
They are at home in forest wild
And best befit fair nature's child
Or wreathed round brows in sacred fanes.

DISROBING, CALLED DEATH.

ILLUSTRATED FROM LIFE.

THAT group of children see,
In frolic free.
They never mother ask
If they may play at Queen ;
Somewhere, they find a mask
To help the mimic scene.
From all the wardrobes gay,
They borrow for their play,
Tugging at their self-set task.
They steal, without confessing,
From their mother, royal dressing,
Their little forms oppressing
With satin trains so fine,
To help out their design.

With roguish, winsome knavery,
They put on mother's bravery,
And mouth and strut,
With gay flourish of each fan
To imitate their elders, if they can.
The mother cries, Tut-tut,
And in doth rush
In quick alarm,
To save her robes from harm.
At the height of frolic's flush,
The laughter turns to hush.
As you strip a tree of leaves,
She dismantles these young thieves,

The gay jewels she possesses,
And all her valued dresses,
She locks in darkened room,
In safe protective gloom.
Their trappings
And their wrappings,
She safely lays away,
Till some maturer day.
When they can use the rich and splendid dress,
It shall again them bless —
Nay — more
She gives them than they had before,
Or ever dreamt were in her store.

So the grown-up man
With spirits gay,
Makes up his little plan,
To act his mimic play,
And doth engage
His place on the world's stage.
He hurries on, but—
Tut, tut —
The mask falls from his face,
He drops his emperor's mace;
The robes which he has worn,
Are off him torn,
And all folded up and laid away.
His day
Of action past; the worn, rent dress in grave doth stay.

Yet if God takes these lives of ours,
As spring's miracle to flowers,
Reblooming from cold sod,
By breath of loving God;

Or as a tender mother, her dear children grown,
Endows with all her own —
He gives them back,
Supplied with all they lack,
Better and richer and more glorious.
Victorious
Power to use them will He give,
When we again do live.
Then wherefore moan, with bitter groan,
When Death lays by the body's fleshly dress.
A kingly servitor takes off our raiment,
And in the grave's robe chamber, we make stayment,
Till in the banquet room — Christ's bride —
His guests have hied.
And newly clad
They are most glad.

Why fearfully
Shall doubts oppress?
Say cheerfully,
God lays it in the ground.
And we shall more abound;
Exchanging then for better,
These robes which do us fetter;
Receiving then maturer
Powers and surer,
This mortal must become immortal
Through Death's portal.

FLOWERS.

SIMILITUDE.

How lovely is the Earth's gay garniture
Of painted flowers, on every slope that spring:
The blossoming May, from her full lap doth fling
Her tapestries of richest furniture.
Its carpet greensward grows,
Trellis embroidery shows,
Each precious flower that blows,
Dew-jeweled garden knows.

These eye-delights, that spring from every soil,
These fragrant blossoms, that forsake no clime,
Like Love, grow anywhere. On heights sublime,
Blooms Edelweiss, cheering hard alpine toil.
It shrinks not from snow line;
While tropic valleys shine
As prefigurement and sign
Of Love's affluence, divine.

The plants of Love, nor climate know nor age
Constrain; nor strange soil, foreign to their vital roots.
Nor space, nor time, repress their vital shoots,
Which Nature guideth, their dear mother sage.
The flowers will grow until
The rolling world is still.
Uncrushed by human will,
Love will its life fulfill.

What limits bind the rapture of the Rose!
Its consummation blooms within the soul
Of all true lovers who in stress and dole,
Find solace, in its fragrance, and repose.
It is beauty — clear exprest,
It is yearning — all confest,
It is passion — at its best,
It is silence, glow, and rest.

The Rose exhales Love's rapture, passion's pain:
Ah Lily! speak of aspiration pure,
The stainless lilies, with their light endure
A longer life, till aureoles they gain,
From out their golden heart, —
Rich mine of ore, apart
From world's use in world's mart —
White crowns of petals start.

When purple Poppies, frail and fleeting troop,
Fall to the ground they, flying light away,
May best express Love's preference of a day.
Or truer fancy finds in that gay group,
Within their slumberous dream,
Rose rims round sad heart gleam,
Blush edges Love's tints seem.
Bright thoughts from sorrows stream.

So flowers of Love are symbols. Their resemblance
In nature and in circumstance confest,
Makes them the lover's envoys — truest, best.
His wooing soul speaks boldly in their semblance.
Love's proxies humbly ask
Leave in sweet looks to bask.
Flower-gift is but a mask
To spare thy speech its task.

They are Love's kindred. The King chooses
His messengers of his own royal blood.
He sees his own reflection, in sweet bud —
In treaty and persuasion, he them uses.
These missives fair and fleet,
Are laid at ladies' feet.
Coin, stamped with image sweet,
Love's currency, complete.

So mysteries watch and wait, and gird us round.
With flowers and love we're ringed on every side,
And long as we shall in this life abide,
Love fills the air, and flowers possess the ground.
Mystic likeness we can trace,
They reflect each other's face.
They illume each other's grace;
Emblems sweet, they interlace.

EXCESS.

TUBEROSE! to me disclose
The secret of thy history!
Is it presumptuous
To ask thy sumptuous
Flowerheads, which rear
Their pulpy paleness far and near,
Thy mystery;
Whence came thy spice perfume,
Or thy lavish July bloom,
That early and late
Doth intoxicate

The summer air, which drinks up
Cassia, and sandal of thy drug cup ;
How is it thy heart's blood
With luscious ripeness flows
Into each honey bud,
Which thy delicious soul,
Sweet prodigal, will flood
With aroma waves, which roll
From thee — Tuberose !

The rose lasts but a day,
Says its say, a few hours gay :
And in height of its fulfillment, fades away.
Fragrance and color wither
And hither, thither,
Its dropping petals, crumpled lay.

But your creamy blossoms stay :
Generous in their calm delay.
Weeks go past, never so fast ;
Your flower scapes stand
With blossoms drest,
With heavy scents still fanned,
And the secret uncon fes.

Perhaps — In centuries lapse,
Some gorgeous nymph, or naiad,
Offended Ceres' child.
Proserpine proud, said :
" Our court you have defiled !
Do penance now, Take vestal vow,
Pass through new birth,
Live in this flower of earth ;
Watch brides' pure smiles,

Give long hours by home's hearth,
Gladden sweet hours of mirth.
Know joy, without alloy —
Till into you shall pass
The heart of innocence,
The simplicity of grass,
Rebuking beauty's insolence ;
Dismissing vain pretense,
Learn the lesson of plain weed,
This is the discipline you need."

With proud, luxurious face
The conditions you embrace.
You still rear your sumptuous head,
With perfumes still you're fed,
With odors still you're faint ;
You still show touch of paint,
In slight pink streak, on outside cheek,
You still intoxicate.
But each year you holier grow ;
Your flowers of snow
Wreathed round the dead,
Most lovely show ;
Or laid on bed,
Of vanished saint,
Illuminate.

So, consecrate
Art thou,
And the sentence
Of thy vow,
To renounce thy excess,
Is repentance
Which doth bless.

Thou dost confess
Thy overmuchness,
With a touch of pride,
Which cannot hide
Thy luxury, nor its taint.
Thou wilt purer grow by trying.
Yearly living, yearly dying,
Sighing and crying,
Self-denying,
Makes the saint.

NAPOLEON TO THE LILY OF FRANCE.

[When Napoleon Bonaparte was crowned Emperor of France, he discarded the *Fleur-de-lis*, which had been the device of kings, and selected the *Bee*, to decorate his new dynasty.]

Look proudly up, thou royal flower,
I yield the praise thy graces claim;
Such wealth of beauty is thy dower,
Thou need'st not bow thy head for shame.

Time-honored is thy drooping stem
Thou Gallic, Bourbon Fleur-de-lis;
Wrought in armorial diadem
And crest of ancient chivalry.

Historic lustre rare is thine,
For blazoned in the shield of France
And glittering as its banner's sign,
'Neath thee, knights couched the quivering lance.

But leave the shield, the banner high;
Saints bid the stirring trumpet cease,
Thou flower of virgin purity,
Be consecrate to holy peace.

So take in gardens thy sweet stand,
And beauteous there delight the eye;
Pictured in maiden martyr's hand,
Fulfill a worthier destiny.

Thy radiant charms profaned, adorned
Base lives of folly and of sin;
Of kings who honest labor scorned,
Like thee, who did not toil or spin.

Proud, I reject ancestral right,
I claim no heritage of throne;
Untiring toil I call my might,
The nation's good I count my own.

I wear thee not in peace or war.
I choose this busy generous bee;
Sagacious foresight, strenuous law,
Are nobler, wiser types for me.

This loyal, patient, golden bee,
On my imperial robes shall shine;
Illustrious through its industry,
Its commonwealth, and sage design.

My murmuring, thymy, Attic bee,
The warrior scholar bears thy name;
Thou too, canst boast Antiquity,
Her sweetest idyls sing thy fame.

And lily, ne'er repulse my bee,
As hovering round thy fragrant cell;
He seeks thy honeyed nectary
And in its heart would captive dwell.

And grieve not, fair dethroned flower,
Nor for lost honors palely pine;
To this successor yield thy power,
He'll worship still within thy shrine.

THE DAY LILY.

I FIND thee, my day lily, hiding in green leaves,
Sweetest harvest garnered shy, in their heavy sheaves.
Tender dainty perfumes bless thee with their shower;
Modesty and purity are thy virgin dower.

Whiter than the snow-flake, thy brief hour's chalice grows;
Whitest of white lilies, thy bud its closure shows;
Absolute thy whiteness, not a blank negation;
Purity most positive, unsullied by temptation.

Thou dost teach that pureness is not stains' absence merely,
But a shrinking sureness from sin's dark thought sincerely;
Not a touch of hidden taint whitest dazzle soiling,
Gives a tone of dim decay thy fair corolla spoiling.

Might I blossom like thee in crown of summer time,
Hid in love's cool shadows bloom through noon sublime;
Show no dark in fading, nor spot, nor stain from life,
Dropping in my birth place, without a scar of strife!

SEALED MEMORIES.

"When the grape blooms, the wine is refreshed in the cellar." — *German Proverb.*

When subtle scent of flowering grape
Floats up to greet the summer sun,
Life stirs in wine that round the Cape
Its voyagings long since hath done.

The lily scent to me recalls
My days of summer and of bloom.
I have their harvest stored in walls
Of Memory's secret vaulted tomb.

So when I breathe the soft perfumes
Of lilies of the valley hid
In leafy shields — then quick exhumes
The love long sealed 'neath coffin lid.

As subtle odor of the grapes
Awakes and stirs the vintage old.
My life in all its bygone shapes
Ferments and heats in dark vaults cold.

My wine in crypt will foam and stir
When yearly comes the grape-flower scent.
Inclosed in casks of seasoned fir
It struggles, prisoner close pent.

So garnered thoughts of love and pain
Like Afrites try to break the seal
Of memory's caskets which remain
Chain bound, nor secrets will reveal.

HYACINTHS.

THE LOVE OF GODS FOR MORTALS.

Memorial flower, declaring love undying —
Does Zephyr careless flying,
When he sees thee e'er regret
His jealousy, or green turf wet
With thy young blood, when on it lying,
Apollo heard thy crying,
And loaded the soft sod with bloom
Fresh springing from thy tomb?

Thy spikes of crisp delight
All are sighing
Perfumes to thy dear sun-god;
While vainly west-wind trying,
With jealous, gasping wishes,
Shivers in an odorous tremble,
And his wrath cannot dissemble.

Apollo's warm smiles, first
Thy budding scapes have nurst;
Until thy blossoms, single, double —
Sweets born of grief and trouble —
In their long-lived perfection stand.
Pluck them with loving hand.

O! hyacinth, the loveliest flower of spring,
Of faithful love a token and a sign;

Immortal love to mortal offering.
Fidelity of heart divine,
Burning in sacred shrine.
Pulsing in deathless soul. It speaks of brows, that shine
With Godlike glory, looking with a smile
Of sweet content on lesser nature, while
They bless it with their blessing;
That love's great sweetness, is in looking down, not up.
The happiness of giving,
Makes the happiness of living;
And the cup that does not overflow,
Is not full cup.
This the immortals know.

These hyacinths drink more from sky than earth:
With deep ecstatic pain,
They behold the sun again;
And in spite of language dearth,
Dumb, they speak in color and perfume,
Burst from the tomb.

Zephyr's jealous, loveless feeling,
And Apollo's hurt heart, healing,
Brought this lovely springtime band;
Gentle May, with her revealing,
Showers them broadcast, through the land.
Good cometh out of evil;
And thus shall it be, till
Endless good, and full dilation,
Cometh with the earth's salvation.

PRESENCE.

In springtime to Apollo's calling voice,
Sweet Hyacinth answers with its green round dome;
Prophetic mass of flowers thrust through the loam,
Within the Sun-god's smile to gay rejoice.
When jealous Zephyr scents once more the breath
Of the fair boy he doomed to early death;
And sees the purple, yellow, pink and white
Spikes of long perfume, glad themselves in sight
Of their dear Phœbus, and proudly to him show
Memorial love, that winter's frost and snow
Cannot destroy, nor Zephyr blow away;
Each year doth he repent, in wild dismay
His anger and its cost? In times of old belief
The immortal gods laughed, sang, felt our grief,
Mixed in affairs, loved, wrought in trifles;
But knowledge now, with weight and measure, rifles
Our hearts of faith, and facts, our fancy stifles.
Sweet Pagan creed! Why do not Christians say,
"Our living God, lives with us, day by day!"

THE DEFENSE.

THE ATTACK.

"Why do you with loving lays
Leafless blossoms richly praise?
Hyacinth and proud Tuberose
Flaunt with pride their waxen blows?

Many dainty flowers you know,
That shrink back from gaudy show;
Dewy violet hides its head,
And lily of the valley. Bed
Of greenest leaves its perfume shed.
Why not with sweet words caress
Flowers adorned with leafiness?"

THE DEFENSE.

How with praises can I paint
Flowers that show of pride the taint?
Brooding leaves may cover up
Many darling blossom's cup.
I confess I love each kind,
Flower superb, and flower refined.

It is true that high from root
Hyacinth and Tuberose shoot.
Dull, unnoticed on the ground
Withered leaves lie all around,
Flowers adorning each leafless stem,
Yet I do not them condemn.
When an architect's great birth
Crowns with wonder our fair earth;
Just as Temple, Bridge, or Shrine,
Serves to set forth its design,
And we love it, praise it well,
So we love each waxen bell.
Scaffolding is all forgot,
Masonry as it were not;
When we see exalt in air,
Dome or steeple flower most fair,
So the leaves which breath of power
Sent to finish perfect flower,

Left behind, can never climb
To the blossom's wreath sublime.
When we read a poem true,
Comes there ever in our view,
Table, paper, pen, and ink?
Do we ever stop to think
Of artist's pencil, painter's palette,
Or the sculptor's potent mallet;
When we see pure, perfect art
Vivid glow, in picture's heart,
Or the placid face serene
Of Proserpine, flower queen?
These are means, we see the end.
Do you think it strange, my friend,
That these sumptuous, luscious flowers
Never seem to need a cover —
Rapture sweet and odorous showers
Bless them, haunt them, wrap them over,
Nor can I, their lover, ask
If of leaves they need the mask.

BOUNCING BET.

A FLOWER is oftentimes a link
'Twixt what we see and what we think.
That fluffy flower of dainty pink

Called Bouncing Bet, may symbol be
Of wild revolt, and license free;
When wrapt well round with imagery.

When first my childhood's eyes it met,
By rude stone wall profusely set,
I asked, "Pray, who was Bouncing Bet?"

No one could tell me, yet this name,
Unknown to friends, unknown to fame,
Enshrined within my heart, became

A synonym for some wild girl;
Large-hearted, careless child, in swirl
Of noisy fun, her days' swift whirl.

She ran the street, and climbed the fence.
Within her frame, life pulsed intense.
Joy, half obscured her native sense,

For vigorous instincts on her crowd.
Her voice was clear, and strong, and loud.
If she had been a little proud,

A little shy, her nature fine
Less blazing to the eye would shine,
And fairer show forth its design.

But all her being was a flame
Of wit, and unwearied blame
Met every action as it came.

If some good matron, mother, wife,
Her heart with thoughtful love all rife,
With tender hand had touched her life;

If wholesome sympathetic praise,
Had met her hearty generous ways,
And sometimes gladdened her rude days;

She might have turned this current fleet
Of life, which wantoned on the street,
In rivulets more strong than sweet;

To channels, which beneficent
Great wealth of growth, to verdure lent,
And her exuberance found content.

No more with hard cold folk at strife,
No more at war with grave wise wife,
A treasure-house, might prove her life.

And so with this coarse, common weed;
Its strength and fragrance for it plead.
Could culture ripen better seed?

This wild and ever-roving flower,
Which hardy, fights conditions sour,
With straggling growth of reckless power,

By village road and farm-yard gate,
Still blooming early, blooming late,
A changeling spurned by slighting fate.

If its rank growth it would condense,
And stay within the garden fence,
Some undeveloped excellence

Within its petals might be set,
And in new grace, we might forget
Its slighting nickname, Bouncing Bet.

THE ROSE AND THORN.

THE Rose is my love in chief,
  Ah, do not me condemn:
I wish that I were a leaf
  Upon a sweet rose stem.

I would with my breath her feed,
  Glad in my bounty free;
If thorns shall cause me to bleed,
  The Rose will comfort me.

I know I must face the thorn
  As part of the sweet rose-tree;
My fate I will never scorn,
  If Rose will smile on me.

A pulpy and juicy stem
  No thorns will bear, I know;
It takes strong wood for them,
  And force of life they show.

The Rose is a soft sweet flower,
  With a strong and vital heart;
I know its beauty and power
  From hardy life blood start.

The thorn is a shield 'gainst thief,
  It wounds the reckless hand;
The Rose will not feel a grief
  While thorns on guard may stand.

I love and I woo you, Rose,
I take your thorns, soft flower;
The sweetness of pain that flows
From Rose is true love's dower.

TO THE CROWN IMPERIAL.

You claim the throne in garden bed,
Dull flower of sullen, muddy red;
You seize that place by right of name,
We yield it with a sense of shame.

To mere hereditary race,
Republics give no entailed place;
They heed no accident of birth,
They own no right but right of worth.

You can no lovely color show,
Your green is dim, and red is low;
And yet a sort of royal grace
Consigns you to your honored place.

All round about the central stem,
As jewels in a diadem;
Like crown your bell-shaped blossoms grow,
Ringing your head in ordered row.

Your pointed leaves, to careless glance,
Have just the look of aiming lance;
Their serried lines like soldiers stand,
A body guard on either hand.

No hidden perfume in you lies,
No honey-bee to your heart flies;
Unanswered is the kissing breeze,
His sweet caresses only tease.

So, without sweetness quick to fade,
Unblest by color, graceless made;
Your haughty, blank imperial ways
We cannot love, we cannot praise.

For coldness is not elegance,
And vulgar pride but gives offense;
Like other flowers, some sweetness show,
And you shall long in gardens grow.

Like other crowned heads, you too late
May find the perils of your state;
Gay, gentle fancies on you frown:
Unloved, you wear your regal crown.

But why, my silent flower, should I
Your faults assail, your good deny?
You grow, as you were meant to grow,
And bear no blame for being so.

In future times, your name will be
A bit of blossoming History;
A relic of a barbarous age,
When Kings and Emperors walked the stage.

If Kings were innocent like thee,
Their subjects would have liberty;
Thy splendors make no paupers gaunt,
Thy ruling is but empty vaunt.

The burden of your lofty name,
Without your asking, on you came;
If monarchies must ever stand,
Let floral sceptres rule the land.

JUNE DAISIES.

"The meek shall inherit the earth."

Ah, the bonnie fields of daisies
Heaped up everywhere, I see!
How the white and yellow beauties
With their welcomes gladden me.

Each new flower is sweeter, brighter,
Softer, clearer, fairer yet;
In the bonnie fields of daisies,
Full of dainty blossoms set.

Grow they on rough hill-side fallow,
And on barren hill and plain?
They are thick as sand on sea-side,
Or as pelting summer rain.

From the earth you cannot sweep them,
They perennial are, like grass;
Pick them freely, — fill your hands full
With the beauties as you pass.

This sweet crowd you cannot uproot,
There is never one the less;
You have left still countless thousands,
Other eager eyes to bless.

So with love, it springs so freely,
Though we walk in barren ground;
It smiles up in our face with wealth
Of eternal blossoms crowned.

We may pluck it for our pleasure,
It will surely spring again;
It is lavish with its treasure
To the careless sons of men.

Ah, the bonnie fields of daisies,
Now give them mute caress;
They know not of our praises,
But the joys of humbleness.

NASTURTIUM.

When Troubadour's romantic lyres
Sang of brave knights and humble squires;
In lowly heart oft sprang to light,
The instincts of a loyal knight.

A lady's page, or stable groom,
Would sometimes earn a gallant plume;
And modern gardens still retain
Low stocks that honor's feather gain.

'Neath ladies' looks they strive to rise,
And shake off every dull disguise;
Their roots of strength are vigorous source
Of sturdy blossom's vital force.

See this rich Nasturtium flower!
Strong and lovely color power;
Bless its brightness; tone its face
Into looks that suit high place.

Once — a clownish, vulgar fellow,
Harlequin in red and yellow;
In kitchen door-yard gay it played,
Or rough stone wall it bright arrayed.

If girl with its blossom drape her
Milk-room sash, "New England caper!"
She chose it, that she might be able
Its crisp, firm seeds to use for table.

But now in parterre plot — divine
Its cross with golden aureoles shine;
Concentered color, gorgeous wealth
It owns with unspoiled, valiant health.

And culture rich, and wise, and new,
Hath left it with its nature true;
It did not give in over payment,
Its best strength for costly raiment.

This splendid knight no more a squire,
With serious brow and heart of fire,
And helm and horn of warrior bold,
Wears cloth of velvet, cloth of gold.

Its rich grave cloak of proud maroon,
Is to its merit, added boon;
Large clothing dignity which refines
Its pungent blossoms, odorous vines.

No garden honors make it vain!
Effeminacy — its large disdain —
Its welcome gives to brave new uses;
Yet hold on old gifts never looses.

So struggling up from humble life,
The beauty won is worth the strife;
The suffering pain of noble knight,
Is better far than clown's delight.

THE ROVER.

RAGGED ROBIN: Rosy flower!
Lifeless words have hidden power.
All the mystery
Of your history,
From their sheath, will break.

Ragged Robin, you we meet
At the corners of the street.
Never tasteful,
Flower so wasteful,
Always fighting garden rake.

Ragged Robin, gay and bright,
You are childrens' hearts' delight.
Some roving lad,
Idle, not bad,
Was your jolly namesake.

We can see him in the village,
Never working at its tillage.
With his torn hat,
His ball and bat,
All the dogs in his wake.

With his fishing-pole in hand,
And an eager little band
Of admirers
And conspirers,
Who never him forsake.

Laughing blue eyes did he wear,
Ruddy face, and tangled hair.
Lace girl's bobbin,
Ragged Robin
With his winsome look will shake.

His sunny smile and mellow,
Have a glamour and a spell, O
Ragged Robin,
Sets hearts throbbing,
That follow in his wake.

This traditional flower rumor,
And village bit of humor,
Through summers came.
Quaint, ironic name,
You will never from it break.

Perhaps, this Yankee nation
In its wise generation,
Might load a flower,
With condemnation sour,
For principle's dear sake.

Rip Van Winkle is our fellow,
His name would answer well, O!
Some future hour,
Wit's keen power,
Such christening may make.

GLADIOLUS.

STEEPED in hot radiance to the brim,
Thy spires aflame with blossoms bright,
Thou stand'st beside the smoke-tree dim,
With color dazzling blind our sight.

From palest flush to darkest red,
From orange dull to amber clear —
All tints of glory on thee, shed
Gradations to the artist dear.

Carbuncle flames within thee burn,
Thou bearest thee with rigid pride,
Thy tawny tints in bronzed urn,
Suggest the leopard's spotted side.

When first I heard thy Latin name,
A vision rose, of Roman state,
A broad arena's cruel game,
The lion, and the martyr's fate;

We see the gladiator stand!
His level eyes the crowds explore,
He seeks the sign of uplift hand;
He dies! The pageant is well o'er.

But English thought and English tongue,
Have lent their fitness to thy face;
Sword-lily summons to my song,
The history of the human race.

A glory flashes in the sword,
The Pagan craved it as his need
To fight with banners never lowered;
To conquer, was his chosen creed.

Then came the chastening Christian life.
The sword was hung upon the wall,
And emblem of their saintly strife,
Sprang lilies, sweet, and white, and tall.

But men must fight, as well as pray;
Fight living foes, outside the heart.
Nor wear their life, in dreams away,
But in the conflict, bear their part.

So grew the times of tented field,
Of ladies' scarf, of squire, and knight.
The lily bloomed upon the shield,
The sword, unsheathed, flashed forth its light.

O, vision of our hearts' desire!
Thy carven topaz still suggests
The sword of fate, the flame of fire,
The white heat of the crucial test.

Still lift thy sturdy flower-stem up,
And show thy splendors at their best,
For hid within thy painted cup,
A poet's dream lies unconfest;

When peace shall rule the broad world round,
And banish selfish greed, and pride;
When war is but an old-time sound,
And blossoms bloom on each road-side.

Ye flowers that blaze with warlike red,
And bristle with such martial mien,
Peace rests upon thy glowing head,
Of slumberous noontide, crowns thee Queen.

For gardens green, and summer home,
War beats down with relentless hoof;
And tramping feet have never come,
To desecrate this sacred roof.

O nations! who at this late day
Contend in deep and bitter hate,
Your rifles drop, your bayonets stay,
Your consciousness may come too late.

Farewell, you beauties! Fairer far,
Such prophecies of good to come,
When truth, and love, may banish war,
And cannons rust, forever dumb.

USE OR BEAUTY.

In the edge of the wheat red poppies grow,
And the farmer, in passing to and fro,
Looks at the blossoms, so bright, and so gay,
And wishes "those weeds were out of his way."

The artist comes with his palette and brush,
And sits him down, in the noontide hush.
His canvas shall glow with these pretty things,
Which fadeless shall hang, in the sight of kings.

Which has the most of truth, on his side,
Artist or farmer? Who shall decide!
The blessing of use, the blessing of beauty!
To love them both, be our care and duty!

CORN-FLOWERS AND GRAIN-FIELDS.

See the blue corn-flowers sturdy stand,
With yellow grain on either hand;
Unbroken in its billowy spread,
Laden with prophecies of bread.

The bright blue blossoms please the eye,
In small, they mirror forth the sky.
The bits of color, in the grain,
Were never made to bloom in vain.

These grain-fields show to sense obtuse,
The mass of life is made for use.
They grow, engrossing acres wide,
While scattering flowers fleck either side.

Thrown here and there, each way-side flower
Adds to our use some beauty's dower.
And in our lives of homely care,
Still grow some blossoms fine and rare.

In usefulness we must abide,
Yet bathe in beauty's flowing tide.
So grow we, as the fields of God,
And blossom as did Aaron's rod.

ZINNIA.

ONCE in humblest garden bed,
Staidly stood my homely head!
Where the farm-house, small and old,
Brown with seasons hot and cold,
Underneath the well-sweep tall,
Built about with straggling wall,
Little could of beauty show,
Save my blossoms' feeble glow.

Careless rose my sturdy stem,
With ugly-tinted diadem.
Orange, mixed with purple pink,
'Twixt red and yellow I was link.
Stiff and graceless, see me stand;
Tough and scentless, plucked in hand.
A jester laughed at me, and said,
"We'll call this stupid flower, 'Old Maid.'"

A gardener artist passed me by
Week after week, with loving eye.
He saw me fadeless day by day,
While chilling winds around me play.
He saw me, steadfast, hear the wail
That moaned in each September gale.

Enduring, patient, lift my head
When all the flowers but me were dead;
And said, "I'll cherish that dull flower,
And give its virtue — beauty's dower."

He planted me in richest mould,
He nourished me within his fold,
Till flushing color struggled through
My coarse, rough stem with juices new;
And double petals, red and white,
My dim head crown with beauty bright.
And then he christens me anew;
I'm Zinnia now, and lovers woo!
In gold and red my bonnie face
In stately villas takes its place.

I'm welcome now in gay parterre,
And praise and honor win I there;
Unchanged in heart, unchanged in root,
How can I thus the critics suit?
No sweeter am I than before,
No lovely budlings deck me o'er;
I'm "old maid" still, but one fond heart
Can life and love to me impart.
In cultured warmth I gayly grow,
And light and beauty round me throw.

The moral of bright Zinnia's tale
Is, love and culture must prevail;
Rank growth, for training eager pleads,
That flowers may bloom from ugly weeds;
But circumstance must rule the hour,
Or lost is many a human flower.
Take courage, gardeners, in your work;
'Neath roughest leaves some blooms may lurk.

THE BROOM CORN.

O STATELY plant of yellow broom!
  On Hungary's plains thou wavest fair;
But larger, fairer waves thy bloom
  Transplanted to our western air.

Beneath old Holyoke's rounded dome
  The meadows glisten with thy growth;
On prairies wide, in deep fat loam,
  In each thou thrivest, nothing loth.

Cut down by frost and mower's scythe,
  To usefulness thy beauties come;
Secured by wire, and wisp, and withe,
  Thou wearest out in patience dumb.

Thy withered head finds welcome place
  Alike in cottage, church, or palace;
And wielding thee with careless grace
  Broad Biddie bends, or dainty Alice.

This emigrant from old world soil,
  This citizen of foreign birth,
So fair, and yet a child of toil,
  Has struck its roots deep in our earth.

This traveller settled down to rest,
  This settler without deed or seals,
A gift alive with beauty's best,
  The old world to the new reveals.

We thank her for her bounty sweet,
We bless the fields that charm our eyes;
And gathering up the threads complete,
We trace a web of histories.

A brave and honest English prince
Admired the gorse, and plucked its plume.
His bonnet wore it. Ever since
Helmets have borne its bonnie bloom.

"*Beauty and Use together room!*"
"That is my motto while I live."
This lovely, graceful, homely broom
Fresh utterance to his thought shall give.

The noblest race of England's kings
Took up his name, and peaceful crest,
Plantagenet! the echo rings
Of all the lines, the brightest, best.

To Hungary's wild romantic lakes
The new world has returned the gift;
Our golden maize her tassel shakes,
As o'er the hills the thick fogs lift.

And though no prince wears as his crest
Its golden leaves, its silken ear;
Our farmer kings, as first and best,
Hold Indian corn in honor dear.

FLOWERS OR FRUIT?

In Ulm's Domkirche high there stands
An altar carved by master hands;
The loveliest forms, of leaf and flower,
Are wrought in wood, with cunning power.

Twined with the linden tassel-blows
In one spring wreath, wave bud and rose;
The freshness, and fair promise sweet
Of all June mornings in it meet.

But quainter emblems, curves as fair,
The left side of the altar share;
A wreath festooned of seed capsules,
Where loving skill held graver's tools.

The pea-pod and the shepherd's purse,
The crowned row of the henbane's hearse;
The rose-hip and the moonwort's shield,
The poppy's star cup from the field.

Which is the fairer garland, say —
The beauteous blossoms of a day,
Or the seed vessels, which but mask
Long floral generations? Ask

The craftsman, to what thought his choice
Of either wreath, his tool gave voice?

Which looks the brighter or the duller,
When wrought in monotone of color?

Which is the sweeter, flower or fruit?
Which is most precious? you are mute —
The dewy morning, before strife;
The glory of completed life!

CHOICE.

O RED-VEINED dock, by green-leaved brother glowing,
Where do you drink the tropic dyes, that wander
In crimson tracery all around your growing?

While you were gazing into lovely garden yonder,
Where round the silver dropping fountain's marble rim,
Flames your exotic cousin: Jealous, did you ponder:

"Why comes the beauty and the stately place to him,
While I, neglected outcast of the broad highways,
Upon the road-side flourish, dusty, ragged, dim?"

Didst emulate his lot, of petting, love, and praise,
And thrust persistent, your long tap-root, till you found
The hidden juices which so make his beauty blaze?

Election secret, underneath the cold, dull ground;
But written on each ruddy stalk and fibred leaf
You utter forth a radiant truth profound.

There comes a conscious moment, when with action brief
In silence of our souls, we make instinctive choice,
We tinge our lives with joy, we blanch our lives with grief.

O Dockweed, tell us in your robust peasant voice
We too can draw sweet sap and juice from out hard soil,
And in a fight with boisterous winds, still gay rejoice.

You gather all your beauty by courageous toil,
Your summer bravery needs no winter hot-house care,
The chilly, shriveling days, that your bright cousins spoil,

Touch you with vivid brilliancy, and brave and fair
The frost's gay colored gifts, gayly you wear:
Death-struck, you show, nor know, nor feel, dull, dim despair.

LATE FLOWERING.

In the spring-time's mildest sunlight,
Come the fair and fragile blossoms,
Faintly smiling each with one light,
On Earth's mossy mother-bosom.
Close in cover,
They all hover,
So shyly hid, the eye of searching lover,
Might, unconscious dreaming, pass them over.

Shall I try to name a meet list
Of softly scented, fair tinged flowers;
That keen prying March winds sweet kissed
Through his four weeks of chilly hours.

Violets grow,
Wind flowers blow,
Pale liverworts their purple frailties show,
And arbutus peeps up beneath the snow.

We will pluck beneath slight branches,
Which slender-leaved, small shadows laid,
Wandering through these sunny ranches,
Dear spring flowers which soon must fade.
They grow old
As we them hold,
Their fleeting little fairy tale is told,
And they, their drooping eyelids fold.

Little prophets — they entreat us
Mourn not their early vernal death ;
Ripening Summer comes to greet us,
Sweet roses kindle at her breath.
Their faces meek,
All pallid speak,
"Cold Winter's dearth has made us small and weak,
We gladly sleep, and Summer's silence seek."

O, the stately autumn posies,
In the meadow, and the garden,
Wealth of color each discloses ;
Their gay boldness, you must pardon.
Tuberose tender,
Lilies slender,
And gladioli's variant splendor,
While salvias red to gentians blue surrender.

You may loiter by the brook-side,
With your warm hands full of flowers ;
You may sit in sunny nook-side,

Through the slumberous noon-time hours.
These will stay,
Bright and gay,
As in golden leisure's lingering dream you stray,
For Autumn's blossoms know no swift decay.

They are steeped in sunlight's glory,
And have simmered all the dye in;
They have heard the Summer's story,
As her brooding lap they lie in.
They glowing rise,
In stately size,
To our staring, color-hungry, eager eyes,
With an ever, dazzling, strange surprise.

So when fervent, human passion,
Flowers late, in radiant after prime,
Its glowing life, in autumn fashion,
Endureth, longer than spring-time.
The cardinal red,
Lifts up its head,
When the lily, rose, and violet dead,
Sleep sweet, in Summer's resurrection bed.

Youth's prophet heart is aye expecting
Some fresher, larger, brighter good;
Youth's sybil thought is aye detecting
Some great potential would or could.
The new love lures,
And old love cures,
And flexile life to shifting change inures,
And the subtle spice — variety insures.

But the force of later feeling
Grows stronger as the seasons roll,

Each experience, with its sealing,
In color stamps the ardent soul.
Inwrought love
Its power shall prove,
To run unerring in its steel-cut groove,
And habit cannot, will not lightly move.

So if summers from us stealing,
Take our tender May-day bloom,
Yet each adds to our revealing,
Color ripens, till our tomb.
Inward force,
Holds its course,
Be it love's light, grief's pain, or guilt's remorse,
For broader is the river's mouth than source.

CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

Every season brings its flowers,
Calendaring their own hours;
Snowdrops, infants of the year,
Earliest in the Spring appear;
Their white looks with joy we meet,
Prophecies, their faint smiles sweet.
Cowslips are for girls and boys,
Cowslips' balls are pretty toys,
Crocuses are maidens' joys;
Tulips artists love to see,
Hyacinths are poetry.
These are Spring's dear offering,
Handfuls she doth daily bring.

Gay Summer with its roses,
Endless wealth discloses;
Syringa's starry sweetness,
Convolvulus' fleetness;
And lilies also lend her
Dazzling color splendor,
Whiteness, pure and tender.
Monkshood with his helmet,
Nasturtium's richest velvet,
Foxglove, with its spotted bells,
White as well as purple, tells
The sweet peas that swiftly climb —
This is Summer's height and prime!

Late in Autumn's wintry day,
Smile Chrysanthemums most gay;
Yellow blooms of full delight
Golden bunches of sunlight;
Pink and purple raise their head,
And tiny baby buttons spread,
And white, we largest, loveliest see,
Crowns fit for immortality.
How sweet, how calm, how closely dear
These blossoms of the fading year;
Enduring chills, they bravely shine
While early flow'rets droop and pine.
Nature fresh in her endeavor,
Stores exhaustless, pours out ever,
Lets these autumn blossoms blow
Till softly, softly falls the snow
Heaped up on her mother breast,
To express her winter's rest.

Some lives like these come late to bloom,
But flowering lasts until their tomb.

And lovelier, stronger far they shine
Than early blossoms, sweet and fine —
Chrysanthemum, I call you Friend,
Whose bloom with but your life shall end.

TO THE PALM-TREE.

SILENT, solitary Palm,
Standing, in the dreary calm
Of the desert's trackless sands,
Where the stretching caravans,
Toiling in the heat's distress,
Toward thy blissful shadows press.

Flowering, fruitful, plenteous Palm;
Adding to thy beauty's charm,
Proudly bearing up their weight,
Wear'st thou crown of precious date,
On thy rounded, tapering stem,
Usefulest of diadem.

Comprehensive, bounteous Palm,
Generous, with thy daily alm,
Wine, and oil, and cordage strong,
Richest gifts, to thee belong.
Light, and raiment, joy and food,
Hid, within thy magic wood.

Stately, clustering forest Palm,
Time forgets its power to harm;
Century, on century
All unwitting, passes thee.

Peace, thy branches typify,
Green, they flourish proud and high.

Roman, Pagan, Papal Palm,
Grecian athlete's wreath of balm,
Payment, for each struggle hard, —
Health and wealth, and song of bard, —
Thy mimic branches strew the way,
To make Palm Sunday's holiday.

Blessed, honored, favored Palm,
Pacing slow, without alarm,
O'er thy boughs' soft foliage green,
On ass's foal, our Lord is seen ;
While fickle multitudes proclaim
Brief Hallelujahs to his name.

Historic, ancient, warrior Palm,
Underneath thine outstretched arm,
Trailed the Eastern armies, might,
Glittering in the torrid light ;
Assyria's host, Palmyra's van,
The Hebrew tent, the Arab Khan.

Storied, sculptured, artist Palm,
Sleeping on her wearied arm,
Mary watched her wondrous child,
'Neath thy shade, she safely smiled ;
Safe from Ramah's deadly fears,
Egypt's land, with thee appears.

Sacred, Christian, prophet Palm,
When saints sing triumphant Psalm ;

See them take their festal stand,
Hold thy branches in pure hand!
Sweetest, and most holy tree,
Full of rarest poesy.
Best of all, in thee we see
Type of heavenly victory!

FUNERAL FLOWERS.

I SAID, "I will make a garland — for Grief
To bind round the head
Of the lovely dead,
Ere the grave they wed.
So bring me each sweetest and fairest leaf
That groweth in field and in garden bed;
But choose for me wisely, friends, I said,
This wreath for the dead."

They brought me brightest flowers from wood and field,
The pink and the red,
The blood-root that bled,
The orchis air-fed;
And all that the stateliest garden can yield.
The rose and the lily, the sweet troop led,
Blue amaryllis with blush-sisters sped.
But I shook my head.

Bring palest posies first of all to me,
Flowers pure as saint,
Lilies with odor faint,
Yucca without taint;

White feverfew, and roses blanched on tree,
Jessamine star-eyed, wet with love's plaint;
Clematis' clusterings, which need restraint,
And snowdrop glad I see.

They are the light; where is the shadow now?
That glooms in purple leaves.
Faint heliotrope grieves,
Youth's spell, lilac weaves,
They tone the light too bright upon the brow.
Verbena, fading like earth's hope, deceives,
Thought pansy, memory's sighs soft heaves;
Faithful to love's vow.

The red and blue which in these flowers are set.
Are life's great color tones;
Glad smiles, sad groans,
The mystic purple owns.
They speak earth's mortal side of suffering yet;
White blossoms say, that restful death is met,
Sharp contrasts are all past — Pain will not fret
The peaceful body sown.

Here tints of life and death each other greet!
White posies lend your grace!
Dress all the vacant space,
Bend o'er the saintly face.
Within these purple blossoms blent complete,
The history of earth's mingled contrasts trace,
Life's shade and sun unite and interlace,
At victor's feet their place!

Here, rest attained and conflict past may meet.
The conqueror ran his race!

White triumphs in the vase,
Sad purples it embrace ;
For memory of battle, makes rest sweet.
What though life's purple heart-blood flowed apace,
Death hid with garlands white his iron mace,
Peace glorifies the face.

DESCRIPTIVE VERSE.

OUT-DOORS IN THE COUNTRY.

I WANDER out in leafy June
At restful hour of shimmering noon,
How lovely are the sights I see,
With what surprise they gladden me ;
O, summer sweet, O Nature fair
I now your largest bounty share !
I joy in every valley seen,
And the smooth meadow slope between ;
The blue of sky, the brown fields near,
While mountains in the far off clear
Shine out from distant atmosphere.
With what fresh joy I spring to see
The wide unbroken landscape free.
The forest's dark, full, dusky green
Breaks on my sight, the landscape's screen.
Now beckon the tall woods to me,
They shake and wave their soft green locks
And lure me soft, as on the rocks
The mermaid's voice, the mermaid's eyes,
Lure men by tender smiles and sighs.
The billowy ferns beneath my tread
Elastic wave each feathery head ;
The purple cranesbill's modest smile
Enchants my sense, while all the while
Late dogtooth violets, now and then,
Peep out of moss in sheltered glen.

Bright twinberry, its long trail weaves
With adder-tongue's queer spotted leaves ;
And yellow-throated columbine
Hangs out its crimson nectary fine.

The forest seems so still — so still !
And yet a rushing sound doth fill
Each pause, if you but ope your ear.
Such humming sweet, such whistle clear,
Such drone of bee, such whirr of wings,
Such tiny horns, such elfbell rings,
So soft, so clear, so near, so far,
That your deep rest it cannot mar ;
Yet if you choose to yield your quiet,
The whole world seems in maddest riot.

There rustles in the grass, a mouse —
I wonder where is his small house !
I know it is a home, not cell,
He is no hermit I can tell,
But husband, father, with a brood
Of black-eyed mouslings, and their food
He 's always hunting — shy and quaint,
You might believe he was a saint.

How gay that jeweled butterfly,
Like winged flower it pleases eye.
The tender flower of freshest June,
For August brings the green, maroon,
And great brown moths in velvet coats,
But yellow ones, the June wind floats.

Ah now and then, a thrush's song
His rapture tells so clear and long

I sit as still as stone or tree,
And the shy songster I can see.
Ah! might we learn to pour such notes
Of gladness from our human throats!

I hear the beetle's tingling snap,
The woodpecker's quick signal tap.
Now settles on my dress a fly —
How blue his wing, how large his eye;
And there rests strangest insect winged,
A gray twig flying, with bark ringed.

How big and bulky I must seem
To those small ants that near me stream
From forest ant-hill. Do they know
That I am watching their swift flow;
I busy — idly watch them go
As idly busy — to and fro.
These and other free wild creatures
Are a part of woodland features.

My worried thoughts, and care that frowns
Of dinner, breakfast, and gay gowns,
Blow off as light as thistle downs.
Within the forest I am blest
Shut in its depths as bird in nest;
Like bee asleep in deep-belled flower,
Cloyed with the honey of the hour,
I only wish to sit and dream
In sweetest reverie's winding stream
Of fancies gay and fresh and young,
Which never uttered by the tongue
Only soft music can express
In their unfathomed loveliness,

That passes all that words can say
Of this sweet Summer's noontide play.

Ah! these broad commons scented light
After the dreamy forest's sight!
How thick the gold-thread vines that tie
This marshy tangle's mystery;
And there comes giant humble bee,
What a big bagpipe bloweth he!
The vibrance of his bassoon's droning
Sounds like some forest's windy moaning,
Or sleepy chants of dull intoning.
The pickpocket, see, saucy fellow,
He lights on dandelion yellow,
And her soft velvet dress he tumbles,
And in her secret heart he fumbles;
I think him anything but humble!
And here the cranberry vines stand thick;
I'll bring the children here to pick
The pretty white and tinted globes
When Autumn dons her brilliant robes.

How can I speak of all this store
Of grass and shrub — I will no more,
How happy are they, and shall I
Look at their joy and pass it by?
I'll drink it in, nor let one sigh
Of human pain, its thought intrude
On this divinest solitude.
I'll join the gladness of the hour,
Reflect each smile of herb and flower,
And cast myself upon the breast
Of my dear mother earth, and rest.

My cares are only clouds that break
The azure of this perfect sky —
In contrast to its blue they lie
And lovely sky more lovely make.
They float so high, so far away
In this clear air of perfect day.
This life so fair to me appears
I have no doubts, I have no fears —
God cares for me as for these all,
He knows each tiny sparrow's fall,
And I should live my little day
Content and busy in His way,
Content and busy even as they.

THE HERALD TREE.

O RARE spring light on greenest tree,
Whose tender leaves like infant soft
Drink in the sun so full and free,
And grow apace, and stretch aloft;
Soon darker tints of tinging green,
And larger leaves will spread between
The sky and earth their shading screen,
And Summer reigns — serenest queen.

But now your leaves, so soft, so young,
Can hardly hide this bluest sky.
The black boughs push their way among
These tiny leaflings, and they lie
So coaxing close to each rough limb,
As if they sought to shelter him
With loving touch and curving rim
Of dewy leaves and budlings dim.

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So baby soft they smile at me,
As if the essence of the Spring,
Distilled, had bathed my darling tree,
And vital joy each leaf did fling
Which dainty, callow, soft, and young,
From out their foldings quick have sprung.
Spring prophecy around them hung
Thrills in each gentle whispering tongue.

Ah, tree, you call to me, you sing
In chorus large and sweet and free;
You join the song of floating Spring,
And chant it o'er and o'er to me.
The rustle of your children fair,
The waving of your crispy hair,
The murmur of your wind harp rare,
Spring's joyous breath to me declare.

I hear the stirring forces sweet
That lift the leaves to summer air.
I hear the tramp of viewless feet,
And forest armies' life I share.
This tree, Spring's herald, to me calls,
The woodland joy upon me falls,
I dream of tree trunks' arching halls;
And pent in streets and housed in walls,
Spring's potent sweetness me enthralls.

THE MILL BROOK.

UNDER a grove of shining green beeches
Gleamed the red mill with its old roof so mossy;
Pigeons that haunted its eaves' sunny reaches,
Pruned in the sunshine their purple necks glossy.

Churns the great black wheel its creamy foam bubbles,
The deep silent pool sleeps so calmly below,
The monotone murmur of millstone redoubles,
The sumbeam makes spangles of mill dust to show.

The mill brook flows on past pool and past shadow,
Into gay sunlight away from dense shade ;
I followed the glad brook through unshaven meadow,
And joined in its frolic and in its foam played.

I, like the mill brook, have had my own burden,
Black wheels have I turned, and millstones of care,
Now I accept this sweet play as my guerdon,
Exulting I walk among fern thickets fair.

The glad brook now deepens and grows a broad river,
On its bosom great ships bear proudly their loads ;
The slow market-boats at brown wharves deliver
Now grain and now stone for the soft marshy roads.

Leaving my play and green ferns and sweet forest,
Let the great tides of life's purposes bear
Food for the hungry, whose need is the sorest,
Strength for the hearts which life's burdens bear.

Onward in distance I see the pale beach strand,
Illimitless there spread cold waves of gray sea ;
Hid in gray mist is the sky and the gray sand,
And hardly a sail breaks the gray mystery.

I must thus wander to pale beach of gray sand,
I surely must follow old paths to old sea,
Wrinkled and hoary as waves I shall then stand,
And these pallid skies will bend over me.

Surely as I the broad mill-river followed,
Surely as brook was drawn down to the sea,
Surely as stream the broad river swallowed,
Eternity shoreless will overwhelm me.

MOUNT DESERT IN SUNLIGHT.

O GRAY old sea! Thou hast renewed thy youth!
Blue miracles of color and of grace,
And sparkling beauty, flash from out thy face.
The cliffs, just now so wild and desolate,
Hoary as age, relentless as grim fate,
And gnawed upon by Ocean's tireless tooth,
Calm with grave beauty, stand beneath the sun,
A beauty out of years of struggle, won.
The rich brown reds, which tinge their surface gay,
Contends with undertones of native gray,
And noble forms of kingly power in stone
Stand sweet and still, in silence grand and lone;
And surf up-dashes, breaking in white spray
While all the waves seem laughing at their play.
Embodied life glitters in sea and sky,
The beach is swarming with its living fry;
White barnacles, the waves have left cling still,
And clustering snails the standing poollets fill;
Some black, some gray, some yellow as bright gold,
Some white and spotless as the lambs in fold.
Beneath our feet their slender domes break crisp,
While the fast-ebbing wave, with farewell lisp,
In playful dash, or sighing soft on shore,
Lulls to repose old ocean's savage roar.
The sea-weed dank, dragged by the tidelets back,
Makes treacherous paths and damp and slippery track,

And as we slip, our footsteps thrust aside
New treasures left by each receding tide.
Our eager eyes unconsciously take note
Of little shallows where sea-flow'rets float,
Some stranded on the green and golden shores,
Some idly swinging o'er the purple floors;
Tangled and twisted as they seem to be,
Each beauteous creature lies at rest, and free.
Here shines a starfish, nestling to the rocks;
Anemones bloom in pink and pearly flocks,
Their tender petals to the sun expand,
But fold at touch of rude or curious hand.
Here flames the dulse in crimson or in green,
Of all the sea-flowers fair, the banner queen.
The spreading sea-palms wave their thick brown leaves,
The sea ferns gently sway their endless sheaves.
Just off this rock-bound harbor's quiet lea
Where land o'er sea achieves its victory.
The ragged islands thrust their jagged line
To break the dazzling breadth of warm sunshine;
Their tawny crags and evergreens burst in
Upon the stretching ocean's coast-line dim;
Its pulses leap upon their craggy sides,
Which, back resounding, give the surging tides;
Their cedars, black in shadow, green in light,
Rest our tired eyes, weary with glitter bright.
Far off across the sea, the mountains blue
Gladden our sight, with every changing hue;
They mingle with the cloudlands of the sky,
Cloud shadows o'er their airy vastness lie.
Or nearer, rounded tops of massive mould,
Stand full of menace, with their foreheads old,
Bald and intolerant giants turned to stone,
In pitiless listening to old ocean's moan.

Our dazzled eyes embrace these monarchs tall,
Far off and near, with sunlight clasping all
Those dizzy crags, where reels the timid head,
And precipice, which dares the boldest tread,
While rushing, hungry waves around them beat,
And crawling foam surrounds their hidden feet.
And over all, the bluest summer sky,
With fleecy islands floating far and high,
And in its dome, low set, to charm our sight,
See, curves in color, Noah's arch of light, —
The crowning garland of this radiant feast,
This rainbow, shining in the far-off East.
To-night the Lady moon her throne ascends,
And to these scenes her magic beauty lends.
Her path of silver glitters on the sea,
And white-plumed waves, within it, nod their glee.
She conquers with her shadows, with her light,
And mystery enshrouds her, dark or bright.
The common seems all glorious, new and strange,
And nothing but "doth suffer a sea change."

. . . . . .

O doubting soul, can you with truth declare
Which is the fairest, Earth or Sea or Air?
O linked beauty, sea and rock and sky,
Island and ocean, mountain far and nigh,
In noblest share, your largest forms combine,
And by contrasting, make each other shine;
O life to come, upon us can you rise,
With sweeter, brighter, or more blest surprise
Than mortal sense and soul now satisfies?

THE COUNTRY LANES.

WHO that has wandered through the grassy lanes
Of dear New England, in the early Spring,
Or jocund Summer, or when Autumn wanes,
Thinks of their leafy charms, without imagining

The downy catkins of the willow plumes,
The bee-loved shad-flowers, quivering, fragile, white,
Or tender single roses whose pale blooms
Were ruddier buds half bleached in broadening light.

And trembling hang against the azure dome
White chestnut blooms that wither to make fruit;
The lilied corn on each side waves in loam,
And not one vernal bird as yet is mute.

There purple-blossoming nightshade tangles thick
Its ruby-berried vines with ground nut brown,
Whose woody perfume penetrating, quick,
Betrays its quaint flower clusters dropping down.

There strays the clematis, delicious tramp,
The sweetest vagrant of the wildling vines;
With green-white flowers, or dim mist whorls, its lamp
Of tender beauty burns till harvest shines.

There climbs convolvulus in tendriled strength,
Offering each morning's gift of fragile flowers;
White trumpets, set in pale green hearts, star length
And breadth of its thick hangings through noon's hours.

There runs bewildered the five-fingered fern,
That gypsy vagabond whose borrowed charms
Wreath city walls with grace, from which we learn
Dear Nature holds all Art within her arms.

There cat-brier creeps with its green glossy leaf,
There huckleberry rings prophetic bells,
Entangling blackberry, persistent thief
Like sorcerer holds you with its cunning spells.

The golden rods shine under golden elms,
Their types in shape and color — humble friends —
While purple asters lift up stately helms,
Whose royal color vivid contrast lends.

And later comes blue gentian with its cup
Poured full of tints of bluest summer sky;
While pale Parnassus weed close nestling up
With white-veined stars greets every loving eye.

The children round a bounteous hazel bush
With heaps of plunder gathered on the ground,
Forget their nutting, and in eager rush
They bring me leafy jewels they have found.

And O the coral of the bitter-sweet,
And O the crimson of the mooseberry shrub,
And O the clythera's fragrance, shy and fleet,
As the low chestnut-trees for nuts we drub.

There with the sassafras and cedar scent
The wild grape's perfume floats on subtle wing;
How we its reddish clusters eager rent,
And downward to the waiting urchins fling.

I turn — a city's walls and crowded streets
  Beset my eyes, which, wrapt in fancy's dreams,
Saw but the flowery thickets, tangled, sweet,
  With which my happy memory crowded teems.

THE CATHOLIC.

INTO the church to pray
  Go I full oft;
There while my beads I say
  On cushions soft,

Come through the windows bright
  Colors sun kissed,
Saints with their flowers of light —
  Gold, amethyst.

Gleam they on chancel brown
  Splendor divine,
O'er the priest's spotless gown
  Crimson they shine.

Dazzling, bewildering,
  Startling to see,
All true sight hindering
  With glamoury.

Deluding their splendor,
  Cheat they the eye,
While true daylight tender
  Smiles in the sky.

O miracle prism!
  O mystic seven!

How broken in schism
Is light of heaven.

Is this light an emblem
Of earthly faiths,
So fair yet dissembling
Truth into wraiths?

Does each earthly, "Credo"
Own single ray
And no one give heed, O
None to full day?

Yet they are sweet rainbows
Set in the sky,
Full of bright promise glow
For by and by?

When crimson and soft blues
And blent violet,
With orange and green hues,
White light, are met.

Lift up the weary sight
To worlds above,
Where shall again unite
This severed love.

THE OPTIMIST.

In summer twilight, when its soft airs come
With night's cool breath,
The silent air resounds with insects' hum,
Intent on death.

Gay moths, who steady whirl, and sudden dash
Against the light,
Resting in darkened room, till lamp's dim flash
Proclaims full night.

Their soaring wings are by the candle singed,
And useless fall;
Their lovely green, and brown, and gray plumes dinged,
Make funeral pall.

O moth! who will gain light at any cost,
Are we like thee?
Which is the best, fierce flame or sullen frost,
To set us free?

Which is the better, to go out in flame,
With wings all lost?
To know the ardent wish, the hope of fame,
At any cost?

Or shriveling slowly, with the chilly rime
Of autumn life,
To perish, ignorant of how sublime
Is noble strife.

VAGRANCY.

"There 's summut in th' weather, I reckon, as sets folk a wandering."
— MRS. GASKELL.

WHEN Spring its gladness offers me,
And sap stirs swift in every tree,
With what unrest it seizes me,
I long from city street to flee.

Ah, how I long for sight of sea
That seems to spread so free, so free,
With glittering waves that joyously
Salute free winds from tropic lea.

The sunshine streams through city street, —
The sunshine here is very sweet ;
But people everywhere I meet,
I hear the clatter of their feet.
Ah, if I might from them retreat,
And in some sea-rock's lonely seat,
Sit watching the long waves that fleet,
Upon the sand-shore gayly beat,
Then should I feel the Spring complete.
Ah, how these summer winds invite
With wooing soft and flutter light,
If I could fly upon their might,
If I could float on yon cloud white,
If I could soar like yonder kite,
If I could lie in sea-shell bright,
And drift and drift, far out of sight,
If I could climb some mountain height,
And with this March wind gayly fight, —
Ah, restless thoughts, they are not right !

The house seems dark and close within,
And noisy with a buzzing din,
I hear the roar of forest lin,
Freedom doth like a bridegroom win,
With fish and bird I am akin ;
Ah, if I had but wing or fin,
I flutter caged in snare and gin,
My home hath never prison been,
My wandering thoughts they are a sin !

Why beckons me this vagrant gnome,
Why should I wish by sea to roam?
The sea is great and glad with foam,
Yet over me smiles bluest dome;
Here with some friendly silent tome,
I will not think on fresh-turned loam;
The hive doth hold the honeycomb,
And bee should stay at home, at home.

I will my much-loved volumes seize,
And they shall my vain thoughts appease.
I'll read and read until, at ease,
No longer beckons me the breeze,
Nor call me forth the waving trees;
This spring-time fervor has its fees,
Like wine that works upon its lees
I fresher am, and like the bees
In work, I'll rest these thoughts that tease,
And honey bring from flowers that please.

SUMMER'S TREASURY.

O SUMMER! in thy treasure-house I sit,
Beneath its spacious dome of spangled sky,
And rapturous, hither, thither, roves my eye
Through all its halls and corridors, sunlit,
Where each day's festival will gay unfold
Thy show of dazzling banners, green and gold,
With interlacing blue and pearls close knit;
Thy jewel-casket, filled with crystal dew;
Thy wine cellars, with nectar heaped, both new
And old; thy forests grand, with leafy arches;

Wild slopes, where grow thy pines, and timber larches ;
Thy choirs of singing birds' sweet minstrelsy, —
I cannot count thy riches if I try,
But silent worship doth me best befit.

PICTURES.

No. 1. DAY.

Lady, in the sunlight straying,
While its glitter round thee playing,
Lends thee such a rich adorning
In the brightness of the morning ;
Adding to thy beauty's sweetness
Glorious halo of completeness —
Thou art Phœbus' dear delight,
His petted child, his favorite.
From his throne of rose clouds piled,
Bending at thy birth, he smiled.
O'er thy infant beauty watching,
Eagerly thy young eyes catching,
Set thy tiny eyelids winking,
And the baby mind to thinking,
Wondering, but ne'er divining,
What could be that gladsome shining.
When thy little footsteps roving,
Wandering chances e'er improving,
First, the confines of the yard in ;
Then, the larger, brighter garden.
Every terraced walk exploring,
Over flower and pebble poring,
Searching with thy childish eyes
Into Nature's mysteries ;

He, thy changing walks attended,
And with all thy visions blended;
So with other flowerets fair,
Thou wast cherished by his care.
And when leaving childhood's bud,
Blossoming in womanhood,
Still benignantly he claims
To perfect his early aims.
Tenderly thy head caresses,
Glossy wealth his touch confesses.
Locks whose length and bounteous wave
Rebel genii would enslave.
O'er cheek and lip his bloom diffuses,
His brilliant dyes most freely uses,
Tinting eye and darkening hair,
Flushing cheek, all unaware
Of its own richness, ripe and rare.
Even in his playful frowning,
Granting only gypsy browning.
In thy undulating gait,
Full of curves of grace innate,
These are hints of out-door sportings,
Hill and mountain summit courtings,
And deep quaffings of pure air,
Thy full development declare;
For robust health thy veins is swelling,
Proud of so sweet and comely dwelling.

Into Nature's homes alluring,
Health and exercise securing;
Wandering over fields a Maying
In the rustic bands at haying;
Bird and bee and blossom rare,
Sun's kind favors with thee share.

So nursed in common sympathies,
And gentle daily, glad surprise, —
The gift of Nature's novelties, —
A wholesome light has flushed thy spirit,
A native joy thou dost inherit.
Such fellowship thy young heart blessing,
Simplicity thy soul possessing ;
Petty arts and acts disdaining,
Truth and Love have had thy training,
Their pure garments thou art wearing,
And their inward grace declaring.
No influences thy nature marred,
Nor with life's conflicts art thou scarred,
But fresh in every look and feature,
Thou art a royal, human creature.

No. 2. NIGHT.

She stood within the moonlight pale,
So white a maiden, and so frail,
You would have sworn that beam of sun
Had never rested her upon.
Nourished only by the light
Of the pale Lady of the night.

The willowy form so drooped and slender,
The look within her eyes so tender,
Those mystic, visionary gleams,
Significant of night and dreams ;
The floating step, serenely shy,
And courting distance silently ;

The soft pale bands of shadowy hair,
Eyelash and brow so faintly fair,

The chilly touch of those slight fingers,
O'er which the fancy strangely lingers —
On wizard's errand art thou bound?
Enchantment seems to girt thee round.

Art thou gnome, or elf, or fairy,
Alien from some region airy?
Art thou truly, earthly maid,
In such tintless hues arrayed,
Underneath some foreign sky,
Nurtured in wild glamoury?

Have Isis' temples thee concealed,
In Egypt's shrines hast ever kneeled?
Of Ancient Rome the vestal named,
Of Modern Rome the novice claimed?
Thou hast set our fancies straying,
Olden mysteries surveying.

Have disappointment's fearful bodings,
Love's deceits or care's corrodings,
Proud ambition's burning fever,
Eaten out thy heart forever?
Or consumption gently winning
To the grave thy life is bringing?

Tell us! O, thou pallid maiden,
Plenteously with magic laden,
Whence thou com'st and whither goest,
All about thyself thou knowest?
Melting in the moonlight's ray,
She has vanished — maiden, stay!

EXALTATION.

"We are such stuff as dreams are made of."

THREADING the garden in the summer dark,
Two shadows haunt the box rows, subtle as its spices,
Shadows in a world of shadow we faintly mark,
And discern them lovers through their shy devices.

Uncertain gusts of balmy wind blow gently,
Thrills of mysterious movement shake the tree-tops,
Leaves shiver, insects quiver: Confidently
They walk in sweet enfolding dream which knows no stops

Nor hindrances. The darkness which incloses
Their phantom shapes reveals the loving, clinging outlines,
But hides all else. Floats up the scent of roses,
The lindens rustle and soft murmur the vague pines.

Shut out from common life, the darkness fuses
All natural sights and sounds in rythmic silence panting
To dream ineffable; the sweet gloom uses
To heighten exaltation and prolong enchanting.

Ah, Romance Land, land thronged with hero lovers
In silent broodings wandering in thy sylvan dreams,
Who would withdraw them from thy leafy covers,
To tell them trancing shadows are not the life they seem.

'Tis by such hours and moods unwonted lifting
We gain the heights and outlook of the souls sublime;
'Tis by a spirit love our poor dross sifting,
We find the gold-dust gleaming in the sands of time.

FIRE.

O, DREADFUL fire!
When it becomes our master,
Faster and faster
Rages its insatiate desire;
Then comes cruel, conquering disaster.
It imposes its fierce law—
And its inhuman rule
Sends us to Terror's school!
Fierce element,
And never clement
In the hour of its power;
Craunching in its savage maw
All that so beautiful we just now saw!
It compels our awe!

And yet the generous fire,
In its smallest, lightest pyre,
Like poet feeds us, from his glowing heart.
His vitals he doth gnaw,
And as the sunset, perisheth in part
Of his own splendor.
He warms us with his soul
Which passes into our control,
His only living is in giving,
And dying is his living.

But whether servitor,
Or conquering King and God,
Who subdues us by his nod,
Like hammer bearing Thor,

His very force, sometimes seems weakness.
The bowing meekness
Of fire power shows no surrender
In its smallest, lightest tender,
The very strength of wind that fans the flame,
Oft makes it tremble,
As it were tame or lame.
Its pyramid, with flickering gush
And windy rush ;
Swerving from its upward course most wide,
Yet preserving
Upward progress, through its changing tide ;
Does most resemble
Our worship, strong, yet faint,
Full of joy, sometimes of flickering doubt and plaint.
Humble prayers dissemble
The force of passionate wish, thrust through ;
Which doth like wind renew
The prayer's ascent, with fresh breath lent.
The show of glory,
The forms of worship, old and hoary,
Like logs consume before the thought
And are as naught.
A burnt up sacrifice,
Which doth rise,
And forever vanish from our eyes.

SURPRISE.

QUEEN Summer, radiant on triumphant throne,
Thy splendid smile to all the world is known ;
Yet sometimes in wild alcove and recess,
Thy laughing loveliness stray sight will bless,

Where fuguing choruses from waterfalls,
Come softly pulsing through thy flower-decked halls;
As if you sometime sought to be alone,
And mother the sweet flowers unseen, unknown,
And softly kiss the tender, drooping leaves,
Caressing spells which fuller beauty weaves.
In noontide silence, suddenly, we come
Unheralded except by bees' light hum,
Upon thee buried in some woodland shade.
We know at once we've found no rustic maid,
For garlanded with roses drooping down,
Dew-jeweled robes and lily-woven crown,
Thou flashest on us from some sweet retreat,
And in one moment, short, concentered, sweet,
O'erwhelming joy sinks deep into our soul.
All summer blessings in that moment roll,
Dilating thoughts beyond dim sight's control.

SUNSET.

I HAVE seen an exquisite bridal,
The bridal of day and of night,
The red sun was groom in the west sky;
The moon was the pale bride in white.

The clouds built a gorgeous pavilion
Of crimson and amber and blue;
Its curtains, the proud, eager bridegroom,
Looked dreamily, tenderly through.

He watched, till afar in the heavens
Shone mildly his fair maiden's face.
Half coyly, across the blue distance,
She first sought then shunned his embrace.

Down dropt the red anger-burnt lover,
Down, down, and the clouds were all gone,
The palace of wonder and radiance,
Like fairy gold, changed to dull stone.

Serene in her height still the moon shone,
With bright stars a vanishing train:
She passed from the path of her lover,
To meet him in fondness again.

The trees shook in shadowy laughter,
As downward and sideways, they leant;
The winds murmured softly a love tale,
The tree-tops they nodded assent.

The pageant was over, and twilight
Wraps dim tree and bush with soft veil;
But the sky in the west is still brilliant,
And I hasten to tell you this tale.

OVERBECK'S MADONNA AND CHILD.

A PICTURE lately seized my eye,
So full of vision sweet and high,
It might an angel satisfy.

It was a face of virgin mild,
Serene, who watched her wondrous child,
That earnestly looked up, and smiled.

She was not flushed with beauty ripe,
Like young nymph dancing to the pipe,
But tempered to the Christian type.

Instead of fleshly triumph there,
The slender outlines, young and fair,
High thought and feeling deep declare.

Her heart with tender joy, elate,
Absorbed, she seems to meditate
On that mysterious infant's fate.

Her cradle duties all day long,
Her self-denials' thickening throng,
She cheereth, with a pious song.

Such holy looks her features wear,
As if untouched by worldy care,
Her inner life was hid in prayer.

Above her leans no marble wall,
Nor silken draperies round her fall,
Nor liveried lackey lists her call:

But canopied with amber sky,
In mildest tintings pure and high,
Fairer than Tyrian looms can dye.

Blest nature bends above her head,
Its healthful air and light to shed,
And gliding stars watch round her bed.

No gloomy shadows dim the light,
But mildly radiant to our sight,
The picture gleams divinely bright.

The legend says — with kindly ruth,
The Temple housed her in her youth,
And priests and virgins claim its truth.

But I would rather think, she grew
Protected by her instincts true,
And inward light, not outward view.

O Mary! hoped for in each maid
In Palestina's woods that played
And linked with every prayer she prayed.

How meet humanity like thine,
Should now descend in essence fine,
Through which divinity might shine.

THE STREET SPARROW.

O SPARROW,
Thy rustic dress
Thy winsome homeliness
We weary denizens of cities bless.

O sparrow,
Thy twitter sweet
Upon the dusty street
Fills our tired ears with rest complete.

O sparrow,
The lambs that bleat
Round answering mother's feet
In innocent kinhood may thee greet.

O sparrow,
Far off from towns
They wander o'er the downs,
Shunning our pavements and silk gowns.

O sparrow,
With loving ken
You choose the haunts of men
Rather than mountain crag or forest glen.

O sparrow,
Thou art so gay,
In merry sport and play,
While we must race and toil the livelong day.

O sparrow,
Thy life so sweet
Contrasts with our deceit
And frantic hope, our better souls to cheat.

O sparrow,
We love thee: Stay!
Content in thine own way,
Though thy canary cousins sing their lay.

O sparrow,
Their warbling trill
Floats up and down, until
Blithe ectasy the silent air doth fill.

O sparrow,
This culture costs;
They can endure no frost,
Their hardihood is now forever lost.

O sparrow,
To us thou'rt lent
Humbly to preach content
In all appointments to us mortals sent.

O sparrow,
We do confess
That splendors cannot bless;
Ah, teach us but thy blithsomeness!

O sparrow,
Groundling thou art,
But speakest to the heart;
Of nature's joyfulness be thou a part.

CONTRAST AND HARMONY.

When revolution sweeps across the world,
Some forward spirits lead the gathering throng;
Their banners to the sky are first unfurled,
Their voices first lift up prophetic song.

So when gay Autumn's smile bedecks the land
With splendid radiance over hill and plain,
Scattered through summer green some bright trees stand,
Forerunners of the glory all attain.

But when the ripening has fulfilled its work,
O'er every wood and field is color spread;
In its concealment the bright leaders lurk,
Nor seems the multitude to show a head.

The woods at first by contrast show and shine,
Their tints the joy of contrasts deep declare,
But when complete the harmony divine,
Makes all the forest glades divinely fair.

So when a spirit spreads through every class,
  Its circles broader, larger, glow and grow;
From group to group contagious it will pass,
  Till through the nation life and color show.

When rank and file catch up a noble cry,
  The echoes drown the trumpet that awoke;
When all bear banners, fluttering to the sky,
  Hid are the prophets who their slumbers broke.

AUTUMN.

Crimson and yellow and purple,
  Purple and scarlet and gold,
Hill-top and brook-side and meadow,
  Shining in glow manifold.

Ash trees their purple leaves flutter,
  Oaks flaunt in scarlet most papal,
Elm boughs project their warm yellow,
  Mingled with crimson of maple.

Gray rock is set off by bright creeper,
  Woodbine flowing red like blood gush,
The deep lemon-hues of the laurel
  Warm brown barren roads with gay flush.

IN SEPTEMBER.

THE MUSTERING OF THE TREE CLANS.

PROPHETIC bough of flaming red,
That idly swings above my head —
Alas that seasons fair must fly ;
I greet thee with a smile and sigh,
A smile to see thy beauty sweet,
A sigh that Summer's foot so fleet,
Has left behind this way mark clear,
Her farewell to the passing year.

This fiery cross from hill to hill,
Each beacon-top with flame will fill,
And pass the battle sign along;
Till through the woods, a gathering throng
Of painted banners gleam and glow,
And Autumn's livery bravely show.
In glowing tints of warlike red,
The maple first will deck its head.

The hickory's noble stalwart height,
With yellow mantle is bedight ;
The scarlet oak stills clings to green,
Motley its garments though a queen.
The poplar shines in lemon hue,
Its glossy leaves seem bright and new ;
And linden's changeless colors stand
The undress soldiers of this band.

The moonlight aspen, silver knight,
Tosses his cloak of green and white ;

It glimmers vague like wreath of snow,
Half dreamt, half seen, amid the glow.
The ash tree, dim and ghostly pales
And purple banners round him trails,
The tree at twilight sobs and grieves,
In funeral tints and quivering leaves.

See pepperidge! weirdly twisted boughs,
Take martial color, martial vows,
The catbrier's thick and glossy leaf,
To orange turns in one night brief.
The woodbine, clinging to the cedar,
Wraps crimson cloak around its leader,
And sycamores all up and down,
From head to foot wear russet brown.

The graceful elm, like carpet knight,
Doffs his buff dress for rapid flight,
And deep lobed sassafras, maroon
In color, fading at hot noon,
But withered, holding its perfume,
Stands by the willow's feathery plume,
Whose narrow leaves no tintings know,
But May's sweet wardrobe, dusty show.

The china tree, unsatisfied
With gayest blossoms at spring-tide,
Airy tulips, rich and mellow,
Its flag hangs out of burning yellow;
The tasseled birch round snowy stem,
Throws golden cloak and diadem.
While green the liquidambar gleams,
Shaking its starry leaves in dreams.

Some liveries blazing patches wear,
Auto-da-fé those leaves declare.
The victims know the flames are lit,
Their doom of fire is plainly writ ;
And the black beech in copper gown,
Full armor boasts from foot to crown.
Inquisitor ; his gloomy head
Fills their faint souls with visions dread.

Such pageants every hill-top show
From topmost peak to plains below,
Such dazzling splendor greets the eye,
Such wealth of color, far and high ;
How can we dream a few weeks more
This wondrous glory will be o'er,
And dull November's barren plains
Be all that to our sight remains.

The musterings past, this vivid blaze,
Turns brown and gray before our gaze.
The warriors all with leafless boughs,
Rattling and stiff take winter's vows;
These faithless knights with wind-bound head,
Shake off their liveries dried and dead.
False to their colors, stripped like knaves,
They stand among their trapping's graves.

BETHEL.

So wild the spot, so rude the bed :
A pile of stones beneath the head !
No longer can the traveller creep,
These flinty stones, pillowed his sleep.

There, lying 'neath the sky, he dreams
That down from heaven a ladder streams;
And God's white angels to and fro,
Ascending and descending go.

He wakes: "How dreadful is this place,
I've seen the angels face to face;
This is the house of God, I know, —
The gate of heaven begins below."

In desert wild, as crowded town,
God drops his angel ladder down;
In any spot, to any heart,
His vision from the sky may start.

Then churches build, and in them wait,
But not alone them consecrate, —
The lonely moor, the wind blown hill,
God's spirit may with vision fill.

Like Jacob lying on the sod,
Awe-struck, we feel a present God;
At Bethel 'stone at break of day,
"The Lord is with us, let us pray."

THE ALTAR OF PLUTUS.

BLOOD sacrifice the Romans gave
To Plutus and the Infernal Gods;
Some helpless, quivering, abject slave,
Poured his life's current on the sods:

So in this age, men on their knees
  Give pulsing heart blood, drop by drop,
As tribute to these deities,
  Nor ever in their worship stop.

Plutus still asks that life shall shrink
  And waste in his adoring throng,
And Fame her honors still will link
  With those who worship sin and wrong.

Men kneel to Plutus, kneel to Fame,
  And grub and burrow like the moles;
God is the stake, and gold the game
  That wrecks their lives and starves their souls.

Poor pagans! cruel were their gods;
  Our Jesus took the bloody rites,
The scourging with the thorny rods,
  The cross set up on Calvary's heights.

Our Saviour was no abject slave
  Whom sacrificing priest may kill;
Himself for us an offering gave, —
  A royal victim of free will.

A royal victim! Our dear Friend,
  With loving heart, with will all free,
To human pain did condescend;
  Our Jesus died for you and me.

No victims fall beneath the thud
  Of cruel sacrificial knife;
From us He asks no purple blood,
  Nor stints, nor starves a wholesome life:

But with his blood our souls He feeds ;
No more they shrivel day by day ;
His wine of sacrifice still bleeds
To keep our lives from Plutus' sway.

He dies for us, not we for Him :
This God were worthy a life gift.
Ah, slaves of worship cold and dim,
May He your souls to his height lift.

A FAIR LETTER.

I WISH I knew, my pleasant friend,
The mood in which this meets your eye,
Attraction to this poor sheet lend,
And tone it to your mood I'd try.

But in your eye most clear and cool,
No random gleams your thoughts betray,
And features trained in courtly school,
Of transient mood reveal no sway.

Reserve is stamped with hindering seal,
O'er fleeting feeling's conscious play ;
The blind ne'er drops, so how you feel,
We cannot know or dream to-day.

But lest this charm of deep reserve
Should fall unkindly on your sight,
'Tis not the hedgehog's bustling curve,
Pugnacious ball rolled up in fight.

Nor quill nor bristle mark your way,
But words of grace, and acts of truth,
And perfume sweet of fancy gay,
That pungent aroma of youth.

'Tis more like heart of complex flower, —
Magnolia rich, or rosebud fair, —
Leaf piled on leaf in wealth of dower,
Slow opening to the outer air.

We scent the fragrance far and near,
Our eyes are pleased with graceful shape,
But in the core we cannot peer,
Nor at its secrets stare and gape.

My rhymes have run a wondrous length;
But such dilute and drawn out strains,
In words make up for lack of strength;
Condensing is not worth the pains.

THOUGHTS OF THE SLEEPLESS.

I LIE in my bed at night,
Looking out at the clear, cold sky;
At the vigilant stars in their silence bright,
And the sovereign moon with her feet of white,
Who treadeth serene through her pathway of light,
With sleepless intensity.
The wintry shadows and barren trees,
Flowerless and fruitless, sway in the breeze.

I neither sleep nor dream,
Yet visions throng to my sight,

Of the golden morning's early beam,
Which this very hour begins to gleam
O'er Eastern palace and mosque and stream,
  O'er Cashmere's hills of delight;
The huntsmen are up in the land of Cathay,
And the Mussulman greets with prayer the day.

The roar of the cannon begins
  By the cliffs of the world-watched Crimea,
And the struggling hordes of the Russ and Finn,
The hopes and the fears which are nearly akin,
And the terrible game where kings lose and win,
  Wake up at the drum's reveillé;
While peaceful we rest, forgetting the fight,
And sleep and the snow drop their mantles of white.

Long since our antipodes waked:
  'Tis their noon, with its fierceness of heat,
Their rice-fields and tea-fields the toiling forsake,
And swarthy groups languidly sunless paths take,
Where shadows of mangrove and banyan-trees make
  Cooling rest for their sandalless feet;
They pantingly wait for the sunset's decline,
And joy when the lights of the evening shine.

The fair Southern Cross is upreared
  O'er the same soft islands of green,
Whose glittering shores with their beckoning weird,
The haunted heart of Columbus cheered,
When their sumptuous charms his galley neared,
  As over the prow he leaned;
It looks on the same rich tropical wood,
The same luxurious solitude.

The Northman beleaguered in snow,
  Is longing for Spring and its chase,
Or tracking the deer in the flickering flow
Of the rosy lights that come and go
From the zenith above to the ice-fields below,
  And show him his maiden's face.
The sky is ablaze with banners of flame,
That stir his chill blood in his stunted frame.

The darkness of my silent room
  Shines luminously bright,
And the frosty night and wintry gloom
Are beautiful with the flush of bloom,
And redolent with the Spring's perfume,
  Through Fancy's sovereign might.
I live in a world of enchantments fair,
And my soul is abroad in the magical air.

IN THE DARK.

By the light of the coal fire gleam,
  In the winter twilight I sit;
All around me dim phantoms stream,
  Like fugitives they flit.
The dusk hours full of shadows teem,
  Which do not day befit.

Pale flying lights in corners play,
  They glimmer on the ceiling bright,
Deep tints in shadow darker stay,
  The brilliant grow more bright;
In Rembrandt pictures all are they,
  Where light and darkness fight.

Gilt fresco gleams like waving sword,
The ebony shines like burnished gold,
The white busts lean from bracket board
Like grim ghosts sad and cold.
The portraits — faithful love's rich hoard
Seem living faces old.

O Night, your shadows speak to me,
Their magic language I can read ;
I love your sorceries — follow free
The dusky paths they lead ;
I hold in them a clew and key,
To pastures where I feed.

The vast, the dim, the old, the new,
Within these mystic pastures rest ;
The unseen world is near and true,
To every mortal's breast ;
The darkness brings it to our view,
Clear seen, if unconfest.

The vision world all hid by day,
At night holds open door ;
From that dim world the spirits stray,
And teach us hidden lore ;
Dreams find the dark a covered way
To reach our inmost core.

ROBERT BURNS.

THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH.

An hundred years ago to-day,
Within a shealing rude and mean;
A soul of fire was cased in clay,
A helpless infant wailing lay.
No joy bell rang, no choral gay
Welcomed the humble stranger wean.

Ring out from kirk of Alloway,
O'er ancient bridge of Bonnie Doon;
Leap stream along by bank and brae,
Old town of Ayr make holiday;
For from that hut shall blaze the ray
Of genius shining at high noon!

That child with poet's charmèd power,
Shall witch thy common, unknown soil,
And from his humble natal hour,
The wind shall sigh, the heather flower,
The burnie dance, the warlock glower,
With gracious beauty none can spoil.

Pilgrims shall seek thy quiet shade,
And precious relics bear away,
Of the rude hut where once was laid,
In "pootith cauld," his sunlight head,
Of way-side walks where he had strayed,
To ruined kirk of Alloway.

In England's crowded central mart,
  In Scotia's proudly conscious land,
To-day are met in kindred heart,
High-priests of science, wealth, and art,
In lordly feasts to bear a part;
  And we devoutly join the band.

Electric pulses throb and swell,
  Defying time and change's sway;
Across the ocean though we dwell,
Its heaving tides exultant tell:
Our hearts, our shores, respond, as well
  As Britain's sea-girt isles to-day.

All honor to the brave, poor man,
  All honor to the poet's page!
His feelings prudence' rules outran;
He did not live a life-long plan;
He died before his years began
  To stamp his brow with signet sage.

He graced a vulgar trade and sphere
  With poet's pregnant vital force;
A working drudge, yet lordly seer,
He taught the workmen songs of cheer,
That worth to wealth was more than peer,
  No matter whence its humble source.

And peasant life he richly sung
  With thrilling tone and heartfelt merit;
The rude, unlettered peasant tongue,
Like stately clarion sweetly rung,
And highborn folk he stood among,
  Their higher master spirit!

So gentle love and instinct true
Welled freshly out his central soul;
His nature shone with morning dew;
And though he little learning knew,
His manly eye swept breadth of view;
He only lacked wise self-control.

Our brother claim we, Robert Burns!
We joy to yield him honors loyal;
We praise the singer, deck his urn,
His tender largeness let us learn;
All bitter judgments from us spurn,
With reverent love and pity royal.

SHIPWRECK.

As on a shore of shifting sand,
Where changes yearly sea and strand,
A shipwreck happens, and long after
The soil has thickened into turf,
Where once dashed up the hungry surf,
We find a relic, knee or rafter,
Or strange old coin, or purse, or shred
Of rare wool garment dyed with red,
Or curious graven jasper seal,
Which in a moment will reveal
The sunken ship, the awful storm,
And how the coast has changed its form.
So as I meet this sad-faced stranger,
I think on shipwreck and sea danger;
He has known storms and heartfelt losses,

And foreign travel, for his speech,
Turns up strange relics on the beach.
Yet over the protruding losses
Of his wild life have grown sweet mosses,
And time and nature bury deep
His wreck and all his suffering.
Yet now and then old tides will fling
Fresh in our sight a brooch or ring,
And though his eyes may never weep,
And he his secrets close may keep,
With pain and patience sanded over,
  Yet keen and sympathetic eye
By this stray sign may yet discover
  That misery hath not past him by.

NARRATIVE VERSE.

PAGAN FRIENDSHIP.

TITUS, a Roman nobly born and bred,
To Athens came, in Chremes' house to find,
As ward and foster son, a home. Chrysippus,
The oldest, only son of Chremes, loved
Him well. Their mutual love such marvelous
Fondness wrought, such generous sacrifice;
In verse I would embalm it for all time,
With spices and fine linen wrap it safe,
And though I cannot with my mechanism
The life blood pulsing through it send; perfumed
With holy incense it may be, and sweet
Though dried away to mummy dust, within
Some hidden crypt or cell of catacomb.
For lifeless, inert scroll has vital force
Long to outlive the life it chronicles.

The Roman, senior was. His toga's edge
Showed the embroidery rich, which plenteous
Declared, as did his curly, thick black beard,
That manhood's hour had come, while the Greek youth
Still wore his white robe unadorned as sign
Of life unripe and immature. And thus
They met. Titus, dusty and travel worn,
One morn his waxen tablets with style wrote
To Chremes brought, who cut the knots and read
That Titus sought Athens, not for pleasure,

Nor to appease a restless thirst for change,
But hungering for knowledge. Longing to see,
To hear, to read, to know. Might he study
The gods, the stars, the soul, the herbs that grow
And wait on man; and his own body. Could
He absorb the temple's mystic lore, walk
In converse with the restless Stoics, or from
Epicurean learn to use all pleasure
Of this life, and know it at the best: sit
Beneath the bemas of the Cynic school,
Who flouted all the forms and shows of life,
This would he call his highest happiness.
Or catch with agile wit, the subtle tricks
The Sophists use, with Pyrrhonist might doubt
And doubt and doubt again. Such purposes
Him hither drew, besides in leisure hours
To study pictures and the curious stones,
Carved work and statues that adorned Athens
The glorious. Chremes gave him glad welcome.
In those brave days each single citizen
Rejoiced in the proud glory of the state,
Elate in its high standing, dejected,
Overwhelmed in its disgrace. They and the state
One body were in breath and soul and life;
And outside praise and testimony brought
The flush of pride to Chremes' withered cheek
In honor of his city's excellence:
"Titus, you have done well. Philosophy,
Poetry, and Art make home at Athens."
Then to Chrysippus turned, who, eager-eyed,
Watched their discourse: "My son, your brother see!
Him to the bath now take, and there make sure
Our honored guest to treat him." Erect and lithe
The lad preceded him to where marble

Cool and white, with veined tortoise-shell inlaid,
And silver fret, held water clear and deep.
The slaves brought strigils, oils, and lintæ fine,
With nap close shorn on one side, but thick shag
Left on the front to use as wrapping cloak
After the bath, and so called gausapa.
Chrysippus watched the smooth skin glow and gloss
Take on: the stalwart form like oak tree strong,
The head magnificent, o'ertopping all
The bathers in brave height, held straight as lance
And tall, with branching limbs of might each side,
And crowning it, the face so strong, so calm,
So resolute, with black crisping hair round
A Brutus' head — his heart went out and ne'er came
Back. His ideal man the boy had found,
With beauty, strength, and culture met in one.
Henceforth they grew together. Titus taught
To young Chrysippus Roman arts of war,
And in return Chrysippus offered him Greek
Polish and sweet, soft arts of Peace. They went
Together where palæstra's space gave verge
And scope to train the body into splendor.
There safely on soft sand they wrestled, leaped,
The discus threw, the arrow shot, or grave
They stood beneath the rostra of famous
Orators and studied eloquence, and tried
To learn its silver speech; to feel its fire
Strike in their hearts the answering, kindling
Spark of bright flame which should illume their souls.
Or when the plays went on in theatres huge,
The two friends sat, and heard in horror how
The gods chastised weak, wicked men. Sometimes
The glistening dolphins' sign drew them where
Poetry and Music held their courts. There young

Chrysippus tuned his beardless throat to high
Shrill tenor, while deep warm bass came vibrant
From Titus' lips. As clear cold blue when blent
With glowing red makes royal purple, their
Tones accord and flow in coalescent
Harmony. Years sped, and manlier shape
And force to young Chrysippus gave, hardening
His fair youth into tough manhood, while Greek
Culture and its polish came gently on
The Roman, rounding off his rude strong will,
Smoothing the rough edge of his character
Which yet remained lofty in aim, unworn
And unimpaired in strength of purpose —
Direct, straightforward, true, and long they thus
Might steadily have grown together close,
When aged Chremes' death Chrysippus thrust
To the front as foremost man of all his
Generation. His friends and kindred came
Urging his marriage as a sacred duty
To all his race; those gone before and those
To follow after him, demanding that he
Keep up his father Chremes' noble name,
Handing it down to mark brave children, who
Should increase the state, worship the great gods,
And their high ancestry honor and proclaim.
Chrysippus made this Conscience's quest, and she
Told him his friends had spoken wisely. Then
He asked their help in a wise choice. They on
Sophronia fixed, a youthful maiden good,
Beautiful, richly dowered, and of noble line.
They also made the offer. Gravely glad
The maiden's friends accept. Betrothal past,
Chrysippus took his faithful comrade-friend
To see Sophronia, his promised bride.

Alas for Titus, when he saw so sweet
Her perfect beauty and her winning grace,
Love dropt into his heart its burning weight
Of joy and pain. He struggled long, as true
Man should, with his unwilling treachery
To his unconscious friend who leaned upon
Him his whole weight, in sunshine as in storm,
Until his cheek paled, his sleep left him, food
No longer gave him nourishment. So then
He purpose took to travel on the Nile
Through Lycian Egypt, see the silent sphinx,
And mighty pyramids with his own eyes,
And in new scenes shake off his burden great.
When he Chrysippus told his plans, his friend
By all the gods swore he would also go,
Nor time nor space should sever them. Titus
Must wait until Hymenæus the wedding
Song had chanted, and sweet Sophronia been
Led within his house. Then Titus spoke his
Mind; confest his bitter struggle, told how
His heart ached and throbbed with love's keen wound
Immedicable, which ever thrilled and bled
At sight or sound or name. This force of love
Like goad drave him away to desert sand
Or savage wilderness, or anywhere
So he might never see Sophronia more.
Chrysippus in his troublous pain rejoiced,
Since well he knew he only could relieve,
And eager answered, "What, Titus — you love
My promised wife! I only like her well;
Indifferent lord makes no wife happy sure.
'Tis fair, my friend, that you should be her spouse
A woman's life is empty at the best,
Child-bearing is her portion. She must rear

Sons for the state in toil and carefulness.
Until her fair bloom gone, she sits beside
The fire, worn out, to mumble stories old
To children's babes. You can love give her, best
Gift to help her bear life's burdens. I stop
Short, far short, with gentle like — dull stone opaque
Beside the sparkling jewel you can give.
Love is the talisman to help her through
The mystic troubles of her mother pains.
Sophronia in obedience takes me,
Not from choice. I choose her with my prudence,
Not my love. Titus, my time-tried friend, you
Far dearer are to me than even the fair
Girl I thought to marry. Take her you shall —
I other mate can find most easily.
Perhaps meanwhile, my fervent fancy touched
May glorify some woman, so that I
Gladly may place my life within her hands
So tiny." Titus, moved in his deep soul,
Yet not forgetting truth and honor, spoke:
"My friend, your generousness so fresh,
So free, so warm, cools the fierce fire around
My heart. But you are pledged in honor.
Will Sophronia, that maiden proud and shy,
Be ever willing thus to pass to alien
Foreigner like me? Perhaps she loves you,
Or her kindred will rebel, and call you
Traitor, uncertain, feeble-willed, careless
Of a promise and a vow. Think, O friend!
No fairer bride can ever bless your sight,
No nobler kin, or stronger family
Can add such weight unto your own, or so
Enrich it with high worth and dignity.
I cannot take so large a sacrifice, nor let

My best beloved mate throw his rich gift
Aside for me to pick it up and proudly
Wear." Chrysippus speaks: " O Titus, my heart
Is not inwrought in this alliance, nor
Is hers. I tremble when I think how free
Our fancy, passionless our mood. What if
In years to come, those sleeping giants wake —
Love's Titans wrestling in our secret hearts,
Like hungry beasts leap from their lair, spurning
The calm content of daily household round,
The tame hours of dull domestic duties,
Monotonous with but child-bearing pains
Between. Shall we each other cheat of life's
Great rapture, and instead of bliss, choose blank
Negation — toleration 'stead of love's
Sweet fullness. Her virgin heart sleeps yet. Go,
You first shall waken it. You love her, and
As like calls like unto itself, your love
Shall wake response in her. Go tell her all,
And that I freely give her right to choose
Between us. Said Titus, " O friend, O brother,
I have not strength to set aside this one
Rich chance, nor to reject your bounty.
Are sure that in your inmost heart there lurks
No shrinking from your generosity?
Speak — for I yet can stay my flying heart."
The Greek his hand on Titus' shoulder placed,
And smiling said, " More frank I yet will speak,
A blond is not my taste, and all her tints
Seem dim and toneless by the dark superb
Brunette of whom I dream. I love the brows
Well shaded, deep-set eyes with shadowy depths
Within their brightness, hair in heavy braids
Of raven blackness, and defined firm outlines

Of round olive cheek, and curve of fiery
Nostril. Contrasting color bold, where white
And red with gleaming teeth, impressive suits
Me, and I wish my wife to be reliant
On herself, on her own strength, not on mine,
Like tree that stands and not like vine that crawls.
Titus, Sophronia is a gentle girl,
Shrinking and sensitive. Your love will build
A wallèd garden safe round her, and there,
Like climbing rose-tree, she will grow and bloom."
" I see, Chrysippus, that you love her not,
I hesitate no longer. Go I now
My fate to learn."
Sophronia sat, lost
In deep muse. Round her ebony chair
Lay the cracked leaves of the telephilon.
Weary with baffling oracles of love,
No more she stained her pretty palms with their
Red marks. The slippery apple-seeds no more
She snapped to ceiling where they firmly clung,
Defying her heart's interpretation.
Then sad she spoke, " Ah, might Chrysippus I
Take for my true brother, dead for long years,
But now restored. His bright gay face I like ;
But how much older, braver, seems Titus,
His Roman friend. I cannot meet his look
So fervent, nor accept mere courtesies
Of time and place, without my cheeks flame out
With blushes, my eyes droop, nor can I speak.
His silent language floods my thirsty soul
So full of feeling, that Chrysippus comes
As an intruder on the thoughts he ought
To call his own. What shall I do ! Perhaps
Hymenæus wise may help me. I'll to his

Temple go with gift of salmon roses,
And pray him me to lead within right paths."
Her maidens drest her graceful small head round
With garlands. Let her fair hair float from knot
Depending, downward to her feet. Her veil
With golden grasshoppers fastened
Was wreathed and bordered thick with sweet
Odorous violets. No outside stola
Wore she, for Summer's mildest airs filled soft
Blue sky. Her basket heaped up high with flowers
Of Hymen's color, her meek way she took where
In the temple of Inferior Gods
His statue stood, and there she decked with flowers
His stone curled head, and humbly knelt asking
If custom and habit would in time weave
Chains of flowers to wrap the steely links
Of wedlock, and reconcile her to her
Spouse. She prayed that Titus might be blotted
From her mind, and the image of Chrysippus
So adorned within her soul, that safely
She dare venture marriage. Long time she knelt!
And when she rose, checked her soft sobs, and slow
Drawing her veil about her, turned to go,
As the god's answer to her prayer, stood
Titus in her path. Pale and tremulous,
He said, "Sophronia, I, too, came to pray
To Hymen; and his guidance and his help
In my necessity ask. For answer
Came you — you, Sophronia, whom I love.
Chrysippus yields you to me if you will, —
O, hear me once! if die to you I then must,
And pass away into eternal night
And silence. I love you, choose you out from
All the known world, as fairest, dearest, best.

I am not smooth and young, like Greek Chrysippus,
Nor gay with gentle elegance; but love
Can work in me all miracles — so read
I it within your eyes." The maiden hid
Her happy blushes underneath her veil.
Yet soon she spoke, and softly said, "How good
Chrysippus is to me," and then, "I know
That Hymen answers prayer." Titus in
Hot joy her hand would seize; but she to her
Maidens beckoned, saying, "To-night Chrysippus
Will bring you to my home," and signed a mute
Farewell. Titus to market-place quick ran.
Flower-laden with votive gifts for all
The gods, he visited each temple where
Their glorious statues, studded with gold
And silver ornament, from his hand received
The freshest blossoms of that morning's birth.
Venus, the rose and myrtle types of love:
Pallas, the olive gray for usefulness:
And fruit and cedar boughs propitiate
The dreadful Furies. His solemn vows paid
Thus, flushed with success, he hastened home
To tell Chrysippus, waiting, his good news.
He lingered not on the Acropolis
To gaze on Athens' splendor. Nor did he
Within the Parthenon wait to study
Athena's statue lifting high its head,
Most wondrous work of Phidias' wondrous hand.
The Temple's vivid color pleased his eye,
And helped his festive mood. Its joyfulness
Hurried him home from this Museum rich
In Sculpture, and this gallery of Art.
He to the Library went, which ever is
The soul of the house. There he Chrysippus

Found busily superintending the black
Slaves who copied manuscript. All round
The room were cases full of parchments old;
Some in flat shapes prest close in leathern covers,
Some in small rolls held safe by ivory slips.
Chrysippus read his tidings in his face,
And laughed. "So you have won, my friend. I am
Most happy. See, dear heart, I now have time
To oversee these scriveners and secure
These master works of dear old Greece as mine.
But come within our flowergirt court and tell
Me all."

"Farewell my red and yellow friends,
Yon rare old parchments rolled on cedern sticks!
Farewell most learned men! You, Aristotle,
Carved out of ivory white; and golden Plato,
Frown not upon your flying friends, your recreant
Votaries pardon; for you, too, were lovers once!
Forgive your pupil's weakness, who will come
Gayly back." Roguishly he bowed in mock
Humility to the grave busts that decked
The Library wall with noble faces calm.
Then Titus told his morning's story brief
Yet potent, holding in few hours a life's
Whole history, and loverlike dwelt long
And fondly on her low broad polished brow,
Whence the white fillet held back locks of yellow
Flame; also the high-souled meaning of her clear
Gray eye, so temperate, serene, and large;
Her small round chin of tenderness, her teeth
Slender and even as pomegranate seeds,
And her soft grace of motion. Tall, willowy;
Her slender girlish shape showed seeming
Consciousness of empire in every line.

Her dress of gracious beauty helped the spell.
It woven was of finest wool, and fell
In soft luxuriant folds, bordered with tender
Tints, violet, azure, rose. So with sweet
Babble Titus decked his love. But his friend
Listened and smiled, and said, "Wait till you see
The gorgeous beauty that I home shall bring.
No slender pallid wood nymph shall I choose,
But regal queen of color by me sits
For life. She wears no wool, but silken gown,
Whose rustle tells me she is near.
But the gymnasium waits, and you and I
Will spend an hour of lounging there before
Our meal. Then to Sophronia and love."

Seated upon an amphora blue in
The cool aviary, stroking a peacock tame
Who at the berries of arbutus pecked
Upon a branch placed in her hair, the maid
For her guests waited. They gravely entered,
In way and place she met them, divining
She welcome gave to heart's core of her home,
And of it made them free. Shyly she chained
The peacock to a perch where he bright shone
As changeful sea of gems; green emerald
And amber with blue sapphires blended. Then
Sitting down upon her couch of terebinth
Inlaid with yellow shell, its claws gold-tipped
And cushioned soft with feather work, she frank
And fearless to her side beckoned troth-plight
Chrysippus, and gently said, "You give
Me back my promise and my sacred pledge.
I thank you, for my heart was silent when
I asked its council. Its silence frighted

As when a child calls for light in the dark,
And no reply comes forth." Said he, "Sophronia,
Your noble frankness I must praise, though both
Of us might earlier have spoken. You live
In Titus' heart — my friend who worthy is
Of every trust or honor or best love
That man or woman either him might give.
Dear girl, we are true friends, we three? Give him
The love I asked in vain, and I you bless
More than if you gave it me." Cordially
He spoke, and with his clear blue eyes met hers
In honest faithful meaning. Then quick he
From his hand drew off his troth ring, and took
Her yielding fingers into his. "Titus,
Come here! She gives you this, and I ask you
To let my troth ring be your own." Stooping,
He kissed the joint hands, and all unmissed slid
Out.

At first the lovers saw, felt, knew nought
But each other; but as the nightingale's
Rich notes rose in the summer twilight, glad
Tears came in their eyes, and they found language
Sweet to say their love. Long hours sped lightly,
Night stars looked down upon them. Titus rose:
"O, Love, this dreadful parting! Need there be
Many more such between us? To-morrow, no,
This very day, I ask your friends for you;
Hymen soon shall celebrate our vows."
Terror seized on the maid. "O Titus," she said,
"Do not provoke my kindred's wrath! My fierce
Uncle and my savage cousins would slay
You as lightly as a dog, and I shall
Be doomed as vestal virgin to expiate
What they would call the shame, but you and I

The blessed freedom of Chrysippus' broken
Vows. Think, before their hot rage you waken!
Titus, I grieve to hide my joy; but we
Must oppose their pride with wiles, strangle it
With snares, meet tyranny with smooth deceit."
"Ah Love, a Roman hates dissembling tricks;
With honor treat them. Do not soil our souls
In this sweet, whitest glory of our joy.
Let me to them go at once and boldly,
Honorably ask your hand! I, too, have wealth,
And thick patrician blood. My halls are filled
With shields emblazoned, as your atrium holds
The busts of all your ancestors. Why should
I then deceive and steal my happiness!"
"O Titus, for your life I fear, and not
For yours alone. Chrysippus they will kill!
You and I can flee to your old Roman
Home, but he must stay. Remember his bright
Life." He paused awhile in thought, then spoke:
"For your dear sake, Sophronia, this much
Will I yield. I will consult Chrysippus
Before I enter this dark path. He likes
Not darkness more than I; and I my doubts
Will bring into the light of his clear soul,
Which with honor's lustre will show the way."
The Roman brave forgot the Greeks are shrewd
And always wily, and prefer to carry
Their ends by fraud, rather than use wise force
Of truth. Chrysippus counseled, like the maid,
Concealment. His betrothal should still seem
Undissolved; and when came the marriage,
The veil, the robe, the darkness would hide changed
Bridegroom. In the litter which carried home
The bride, Titus as bridegroom's nearest friend

Had right to sit as best man to Chrysippus.
He then unseen should take the bridegroom's place.
The rites once past, no one would dare to come
Between a husband and his wife. With pain
Reluctant Titus yields to this shrewd plan,
O'erborne by his great love and trust in those
Two dearest to his heart. He wears the mask
He hates, but not for long, else would he tear
It off. His intercourse of stealthy joy
Blooms soon for all to know. The wedding gay
Was named — the eve of the eighth and twentieth day
Of the month Hecatombaion. Titus
In feast-robe red, his sandals too red thonged,
In joy brought home his white-robed bride.
The saffron canopy closed in the three
From all eyes but their own. Chrysippus planned
It so that in the street by darkness hid,
Titus slipped in his place. Sophronia shy
And trembling beneath her coronal of wheat
With vine leaves twined, felt Titus' warm hand steal
Into her own, and no more felt afraid.
He lifted her white peplum from her face
And kissed her in the night and silence. Next
Day he with Chrysippus went, and told her
Friends of the deceit and its success. They
Raged at first, but when they found him noble,
Wealthy, and wedding sealed, they made the best
Of what they could not help. All but one youth
Who swore revenge upon Chrysippus for aid
And abetment of the lovers. Peace made,
Chrysippus safe from harm and vengeance free,
As they thought then — they sailed for Rome where they
In splendor dwelt for many years, loving
And prospering much. But Chrysippus, lonely

Meanwhile, fell in sad distress. Carelessness
Was his besetting sin, and Titus was
Gone, his guide and counselor. So false friends
His substance wasted, until Poverty
Sat in his house and called it home. Watching
His hour of base revenge, Xeniades
Bought up his debts, and him in prison threw,
Whence he crawled out in ten years' time, heart-broken
With despair. No word could he of his straits
Send to Titus, for poverty can pay
No heralds, nor find messengers. On galley
He took place, and hard worked his passage through
To Rome. There asking for his friend's house, he
Was shown a marble palace in the street
Cannæ, between the Esquiline and Cœlian
Mountains. The splendid xystus with brave
Stately pillars startled him ; but when he
Stood within the peristylium of the house
Inlaid with verdantico, the lapis
Lazuli rare, obsidian and pretty
Rose or crimson colored breccia, giallo
Antico and Briton's purple marble,
With red Egyptum, set in floorings wide
Of Luna stones of white Pentelican,
He turned away in shy dread, lest he should
Intrude his wretchedness to blot and mar
Such braveries. Then he thought "If I might
See my Titus without his ever seeing me,
Then should I know whether his heart is still
Vital within his breast." He lingered near,
Until the chariot drave up to the door
To take the master to his court. Titus
Came out wrapt in grave cares, nor looked to right
Or left ; lost in his thought, nor saw at all

The humble beggar, leaning to the wall.
But poor Chrysippus fancied that his eyes
Coldly, yet full of recognition, fell right
Upon him. A broken man he wandered
Off, and only longed to die, now he made
Sure his friend had failed him. His morbid thought
In every way said, *die!* There is no place
Or work on this broad earth for you. Die — die!
Quick, before your courage fails you, with
The rest of life's best gifts. While in bad dream
He wandered with this nightmare's chilly clutch
Upon his soul, came a wild rushing crowd
Hunting a murderer in the market place.
"This is my chance. I will not kill myself,
But these shall slay me!" He stopped, and cried aloud
In new-born hope of freedom from his life
And all its burdens, "I am he. I did
The murder." In the next moment's space, torn,
Pressed upon, and buffeted, he found
Himself hurried along to the Tribunal
As a base murderer. "He has confest,
He has confest the deed," the people cry,
And drag him to the judgment seat. Alas!
Such a poor end to a sweet life! When lo!
He looked, and Titus sat as Judge within
The Curule chair. He knew his friend — his friend
Did not know him, so changed by prison life
And poverty. The Judge the accusers
Asked for proof against the prisoner. But
They cried, "He has confest!" "You say that you
Are guilty. Look at me, and speak. Obey
Your Judge!" But when Chrysippus raised his eyes,
Their tender light smote Titus to the soul.
"I know that look familiar. Those clear eyes —

No sin they show. Who is it? tell me. Speak!"
"Do you not know Chrysippus?" "Chrysippus,
My dear friend, can it be you?" and from chair
Descending, on his neck Titus quick fell.
Titus, the Roman Senator, the head
And front of the proud state, fell on his neck
And passionately embraced him. "O, friend,
I have so longed for you in all my joy:
You, from whose hands I once received the best
Of all best joys, my wife. As for this charge,
I, too, will stand accused. If he did murder,
So did I. Go, lictors, find the real
Criminal. Till then I too will share
Prison and punishment." There they both went!
They sought the guilty murderer in vain,
And after days of search, the lictors came
To court as empty-handed as they went.
Chrysippus must endure the penalty.
He had meanwhile to Titus told his griefs;
How heavily misfortune prest on him;
His cowardly despair when he believed
His friend had failed him and his self-charged guilt,
In hopes that Justice would let out the life
He did not care to keep. In face of Rome's
Best senators, Titus with him abode
In prison, cheering, loving him, willing
To share his wrongful death, if death must come.
And true Sophronia came, fair matron mild,
To comfort them. Bringing her daughters sweet,
Her tall strong sons; even with babes around
Her knee, she sat within those dreary walls,
And gay and bright, told of the Roman games,
The holidays just past: how her garden grew;
And that Menippus showed another pearl

Within his baby lips ; how Terentia
Prattled of her father and his dear friend,
As only a true woman can. Then came
The final trial. Indignant senators,
Angry at the shame upon their order,
Tried to rescue Titus from the law's strong grip,
But he stood firm by friend. "Save both, or both
Shall die." The senators essayed all lawful means.
They proved that elsewhere Titus surely was
In judgment seat when the affray began.
But he still said, "Chrysippus' hands are pure
As mine. No murder have we either done.
Save both, or let me die, and in his place!
If only one can suffer, let me be
That one! Life has been good to me and hard
To him. Give him another chance! The Fates
May be more kind!" In time this conflict rare
The real murderer heard, who touched in some
Clean spot of his black heart, not wholly foul,
Declared his guilt, and shows the blood-stained knife,
The spoils, and even the broad signet-ring
Drawn from the body, — and so the loving friends
Are cleared. This history strange was noised abroad,
And to Octavius Cæsar's mighty ears
It came. Triumvir he and powerful.
"Some good rests yet within that man who truth
Has told to his own hurt. I pardon him!
Let him a soldier make and kill by right,
And thus his blows I legalize. These friends
So true, this friendship glorious, wonderful,
I would preserve to Rome. Chrysippus, be
Henceforth a Roman citizen! That shall rebuild
Your life anew, and courage once more give
You that never more you try again your life

Away to throw for want of fortune's gifts.
Then to grave Titus who stood near
He said: "Take care of your new Roman Greek.
Perhaps if you need help to make him grow
And root him here to bear the state good fruit,
That pretty sister resting within your
Sunny shelter, like dark-eyed blossom 'neath
Protecting wall, may well assist you. But
He goes not away from Rome." And Titus
Made good Octavius' words; and ere long
Chrysippus fair Cleonice had married,
Titus' young sister. His fortunes rebuilt
Were by Titus, his prudent, wiser friend.
His active brain shook off his numb despair,
And he took foremost rank among Rome's best
Advocates. His clientale was noble,
Large, and rich; and in yellow byssos robe
His wife shone whom he fondly loved, seeing
In her the reflex image of brave Titus,
Softened by sex, yet showing all his traits.

He later boasted of his boyhood's choice
For a dark Roman lady, one who should
In rustling silk sit calm beside the winter's
Fire, and rule her maidens and love well
Her spouse in proud imperial dignity.
And children came to grow in love with all
The blossoms of Sophronia's household dear;
Faithful in nature and inheritance
They grew, though spared their father's trials great.

RESISTANCE.

TALL Scanderbeg, the mighty king,
Who made Epirus' kingdom ring
With his great deeds of sword and lance,
Saw a rude soldier eye askance
A captive's robe, and then advance
In stealthy, greedy mood, and snatch
The helpless prisoner's garb away.
His wrath burned quick as dry roof thatch,
He never stopped a word to say,
But he gave chase with sword in hand.
The soldier dared not face the brand,
But coward ran in wild dismay,
Nor dared for mercy once to pray.
He ran in terror to the wood
Whose secret depths he understood;
But soon he found that on his pace
The tall king gained. In his disgrace
He thought at swift feet back to fling
The cursed garment; but the king
Ne'er stooped to pick up the poor thing,
But onward rushed as if bird's wing,
Not human feet, his wrath did bring.
No time for pity's prayer to urge;
No time for speech when on the verge
Of such king's vengeance. Suddenly
He checked his course, he ceased to fly,
And turned so quick upon the king
With uplift hand and sword at breast,
That hardly could the king at best
Evade the stroke which challenged strife
And almost took away his life.

Said Scanderbeg, " No coward thou.
To steal from prisoner, that was mean
And treacherous, and deserves most keen
Contempt and condign punishment.
Take back the garment to his tent,
And thou thy life I will allow,
Since resolute you faced me now.
To fight me was a daring deed ;
To that same courage now give heed,
And cherish it — it helped your need.
And from one virtue swift proceed
To build, and nourish all the rest,
For courage is the sacred test
Of a great soul." Then turning back,
He calm retraced his rapid track.
The smiling courtiers soon he found
Who sat indifferent on the ground,
And watched this chase as one would watch
A soaring hawk, a running hound,
Sure that the king would culprit catch,
And said to them, " Now understand
And praise the power of courage grand.
Meet danger boldly — brave man's will
With might can each occasion fill
When Fortune frowns, resist with vigor,
Meet her chill looks with equal rigor.
Resistance in a manly soul
Will all her flouts and stings control."

THE SULTAN'S DAUGHTER.

A LEGEND OF BYZANTIUM.

THE Sultan's daughter went within
Her turret cell, to pray;
To kneel, confessing every sin;
To scourge her fair and tender skin;
To weep and fast, that she might win
Sweet pardon — if she may.

She closed and barred the turret door,
To shut out all beside;
While round the threshold wait the poor,
The beggars lame and blind and sore,
Who seek the help she gave before,
And will not be denied.

The murmur of their piteous plaint
Disturbs her pious prayers,
And mortal miseries touch and taint
The holy rapture of the saint;
The heavenly vision seems but faint
By side of earthly cares.

Reluctant, rising from her knees,
She said, with accents sweet,
"O Lord! I must take care of these,
Their weary, sad, and hungry pleas,
My listening ears unconscious seize,
Even at my Saviour's feet."

She left her cell, and gave them food,
And bound up many a wound.

They thanked and blest the maiden good.
In service all the day she stood —
At night she sought her solitude ;
A miracle she found.

Weary, in oratory's gloom,
She mourned her vanished hours ;
A seraph towered within the room,
Unearthly light his locks illume,
And all around floats sweet perfume,
From garlands of fresh flowers.

Upon the altar these he laid,
Bright roses red and white.
"Take these for token, holy maid,
Thy prayer and penance thou hast stayed,
The call to labor prompt obeyed ;
Better than many a matin said,
Is active service, freely paid:
Thy God in thee delights."

The Sultan's daughter pale with joy,
Adoring knelt to pray.
So thankful for her day's employ,
For charity which did annoy,
Was turned to bliss without alloy.
The angel soared away!

So, when we long to muse alone,
In sweet and serious thought,
Or send our wishes to His throne,
Or make a wordless heartsore moan,
Which only to our God we own —
By this sweet legend taught

In working life, to find content
In outward duteous toil;
For angel visitors are sent,
And wondrous light, and perfume lent
For after-cheer, to hours thus spent
In weary drudging moil.

The thorn of sacrifice shall bloom
With roses fair and sweet,
Immortal garlands deck the tomb
Of buried self, which may assume
An altar's shape, and fire illume,
And sacred incense' heat.

THE LEGEND OF ST. CHRISTINA.

WHEN holy souls believed that God
Sent them to cloisters cold and gray,
And life in convent cell must nod
And drone its force in dreams away, —

A Roman girl, to Christ the Lord,
Vowed all her heart, and soul, and life;
Her holy zeal, her gifts outpoured
Woke Pagan rage to savage strife.

Her idols, wrought of silver mould,
She broke and scattered to the poor;
Her images of carven gold
Exchanged for bread, sharp hunger's cure.

Her angry, proud, patrician sire,
First scourged her tender flesh with rod;
In dungeon dark, in filth and mire,
She waited his imperial nod.

With millstone tied about her neck,
To sink her fathoms deep in brine,
They threw her from a vessel's deck,
She rose, and floating — won her shrine.

In Lake Bolsena's waters came
To saintship, ere she touched the shore,
Christina, with her heart of flame,
Which burned to worship and adore.

For angels round her floating glide,
They wrap her limbs in garments white;
The stone they bear, the waves divide,
She moves in spirit — might and light.

And in these later days, when life
Gregarious loads our path with sin
Of deed and word, in active strife,
Mixed with temptations from within,—

The millstone hangs about our throat;
Our breath comes choking with the tide;
When lo! a miracle, we float,
And angels watch us at our side.

Meek faith and holy love can bear
All crushing burdens as no weight,
And hard and heavy fate will wear
A saintly smile in heavenly gate.

DEAD, BUT UNBURIED.

I SEE across the assembly,
And often pass in the street,
A woman dead. I saw her die —
Yet her body each day I meet.

She was dear to my heart when living;
She was true, and kind, and sweet;
She was striving always, and giving,
And made straight paths for her feet.

But a poisoned air came near her
And it filled her veins with fire;
I saw the malaria sear her,
And her faint drawn breath expire.

Yet unburied, she walks the pavement,
I see her at church and at ball;
Though she 's only fit for ingravement,
She 's welcome in crowded hall.

They do not know that her spirit
Exhaled five years ago;
That the fleshly shape of demerit —
Coarse fabric, is all she can show.

But I know her breath is tainted
With silent and sure decay,
The bloom on her cheek is painted;
Pure kiss would brush it away.

It will never do to proclaim her,
The shock of the tombless dead
Would recoil on those who name her;
So I leave her name — unsaid.

CHRIST WITH THE DOCTORS.

ENCAMPED within the palm-trees shade,
A pilgrim band their wanderings stayed;
Of starless night they were afraid,
Of unknown foes and sudden raid.

"Where is my son?" a mother said,
Her saintly face all flushing red;
From group to group she hurrying sped,
As on the sands their tents were spread.

She found him not with any friend;
Anxieties their sad hearts rend.
Their weary footsteps backward wend,
And find him after three days' end.

Within the Jewish Temple's court,
Where disputants do make resort,
With gentle eye, but regal port,
Came a young lad of peasant sort.

His earnest looks their help beseech,
"O, wise men! pray thy pupil teach,
I seek but gifts within your reach,
O, give me answer to my speech!"

He listens to their tedious talk,
In useless circles round one walk,
Glittered his eye, like eye of hawk:
"Dost thou a hungry soul thus balk?"

Away in bitterness he turns,
His baffled thought within him burns;
When suddenly, he clear discerns,
That each one for himself best learns.

"It comes to me that I am meant
To be a teacher, world-wide sent;
In God's own service to be spent, —
To lose my life, and be content.

"They are the shadows, I the sun;
Their idle course is nearly run;
My shining is not yet begun, —
I shine till Paradise is won."

A woman's hand lies on his arm, —
"Who touches me — I do no harm?"
"My child, thou 'st given us much alarm," —
Her loving looks his angers charm.

"O, woman, I have learned my lot!
O, darling mother, wist ye not
You cannot bind me to one spot,
My life is far outside your cot.

"In stature as I daily grew,
My soul has grown in wisdom, too;
What prophets from the angels knew,
My instincts tell me clear and true.

"From droning bigots' shake I clear,
Wrapt up in vestments old and sear;
Both scribes and pharisees are mere
Shells of past faith — the kernel 's here.

"Upon yon dreary hill-top's height,
While surging nations round it fight,
I see a cross of wondrous might,
Of all the world the central light.

"O, mother dear, I pity you;
I must my Father's business do;
For sinners' pardon I must sue,
And drink the wormwood and the rue."

Strong passion can no more him goad.
The patient camel takes its load;
Through dim and lonely winding road
He seeks the caravan's abode.

Once more a child, he then began
His future life to clearly scan;
He worked and played, yet secret plan
Moulded our Jesus into man.

In depths his mother's soul was stirred,
She pondered o'er his mystic word;
Hid in her heart, like fluttering bird,
Nought of her thought her husband heard.

RESPONSIBILITY.

THREE sisters blossomed so bright and fair.
The first in her glossy auburn hair
White myrtle wreath twined — a true bride's wear.

The second on braids of raven hair
Wore the laurel crown with rightful air,
And bravely she graced Fame's chaplet rare.

The third in death lay — Ah me, her share
Was rosemary dark in golden hair,
A false lover's hand had placed it there.

The mother stood by her daughters three,
Silently weeping with them stood she, —
Once stood they alike around her knee.

"You gave yourself an alcove of Fame,
You — chose the shrine of Love for your name:
But she — is hid in recess of Shame.

"Did you care too much for your wise books,
And spend your time in library nooks,
Forgetful of her sad, downcast looks?

"Did you in parlor with children sweet,
And lover husband, a home complete,
Forget her young face and lonely feet?

"And I who loved you, and saw you rise
To the utmost height of a mother's eyes;
I know I was kind, but was I wise?

"Did I trust too much to the understood
Transmitted virtues of righteous blood,
And think my child would surely be good?"

"'Tis vain to ask," and the mother sighs,
And kisses the violet-lidded eyes,
But each heart quick beats its low replies.

Like sword in heart of each sad weeper,
Standing over the quiet sleeper,
Piercing came — "Am I my brother's keeper?"

MISUNDERSTANDING.

He. "With half a tear, with half a sigh,
Lady, I write to say, 'Good-by;'
Our brief acquaintance has been sweet,
My thanks I lay before your feet.

"These few short hours of careless talk,
A croquet game, a moonlight walk,
Where dullness stood with sullen face,
You brightened with your light and grace.

"A traveller's blessing pray receive —
My passing preference — with your leave —
To offer more in such rude haste
Would be too sadly out of taste.

"Our parting gives me cause to grieve
No stronger tie these hours can weave,
Than subtle perfume of the wind,
Which passes leaving nought behind.

"This modest tribute is so small,
Why should I offer it at all?
I hope some future favoring hour
May bring this bud to friendship's flower."

She. "'A passing preference!' Can it be
Such trifle offered is to me.
Is moderate liking gift enough?
He needs an answer sharp and rough.

"Your farewell has a mocking sound,
Your preference has no solid ground;
You need not praise me for the power
Of passing off a listless hour.

"For tepid drinks I dare no choice,
Or lukewarm loves of feeble voice.
Too cool your mood in praise or blame;
Too idly free you went as came."

He. "You quarrel with my preference,
The measured word gives you offense;
You only value love's rich store,
You ask that all should you adore.

"Spoilt beauty! as time passes by,
Your anger it will mollify;
A 'passing preference,' you will see,
May not unworthy homage be.

"In depths of woodland, some lone bird
In ecstasy of song is heard;
The traveller catches a few notes
That Summer's silence to him floats.

"Within the changeful sunset sky
The cloudlets flush, and pale, and die;
For one brief hour the rose can give
Its perfect fullness, leave to live.

"The loveliest things in nature seize
No longer love than waits on these:
A moment's sweetness, in the heart
A smile, a sigh as they depart.

"Why cherish you this vain desire,
A stronger feeling to inspire?
No fair exchange you wish to make;
You never give but always take.

"Would you allow me power to place
Upon your memory a deep trace?
This I am sure you would deny;
You are too angry to reply.

"When youth has paled its glowing fire,
And passion burnt out its desire,
Like passing perfume in the street,
A moment's liking will be sweet.

"Like flying bird and sunset sky,
Is friendly look from stranger's eye;
The rose most beautiful is made,
Although so soon we see it fade.

"A short-lived love is not more wrong
Than fleeting color, floating song:
Nor holds my preference any harm;
It only shows your power to charm.

"Then grateful be, if not past by
With empty word and careless eye;
Experience brings a thankful sense
Of even a 'passing preference.'"

ALLIANCE.

In an olden kingly castle
Lived a monarch and his wife;
She was Queen, and yet Fear's vassal,
Trembling for her Saxon life.

Vortigern and fair Rowena —
For each other's sake they bore
All the taunts of spirits meaner,
All the ancient quarrel sore.

Said the king: "In Isle of Thanet,
With brave foes truce cup I drank;
Shall I now with red blood stain it?
With my lances' points them thank?

"Why should nobles still be whetting
Old Time anger's blunted edge?
That peace goblet meant forgetting,
And Rowena — is their pledge.

"O, fierce Welshman, cease your shaming
My radiant bride is smiling.
Cunning Dane, stop silent blaming,
Accept her reconciling.

"Love is good and just. Believe me —
I am Briton, yet you see
This fair Saxon girl receive me
Without thought of treachery.

"And so strong her hair will bind me
In its chains of flexile gold,
That I ne'er can look behind me
To renew the wranglings old.

"Why keep up this constant fretting,
Honor's brightness you defile —
My vows and oaths upsetting,
Do you wish to make me vile?"

Fiercely raged the fiery Briton,
Fiercely raged the savage Dane;
But the sluggish slow-mould Saxon
Listened each to leading Thane.

"You must live in peace, O Saxon,
Nor think it coward shame;
We must willing pay this tax on
Briton King's beloved dame."

So by force of brave example,
Peace now reigns — secure and good;
War steeds now no more may trample
Through the fields all dyed with blood.

And a nation's noble union
Came from this true marriage vow;
King and queen in full communion,
Serf and churl, together plow.

For the Danish babies prattled
With Welsh children in the field;
Briton's warriors no more battled,
But to Saxon fair girls yield.

Their clear eyes were blue and tender;
They had massive, sunny curls;
These now shine in radiant splendor
On the heads of English girls.

THE LAST CRUSADE OF THE EMPEROR FRIEDRICH BARBAROSSA.

THROUGH the misty Middle Ages, towering high above the rest,
Glitters Kaiser Barbarossa, with a bright and spotless crest.

Good in camp and great in council, large he rises to our view,
Kingliest presence 'mid the shadows that crowd the century through.

When the red beard of his manhood hung in ashen white and gray,
Through the hungry mountain passes Kaiser Friedrich took his way.

"Our holy tomb, Jerusalem, is seized by Saladin,
And Paynim profanation takes the place of prayer and hymn.

"With one clearly pious action let our life for this world end,
And Jerusalem the glorious, from this pagan rout defend!"

On the plain of Roncaglia, where his shield, seen high and far,
Shone upon his loyal soldiers as a changeless radiant star,

Shone upon the battered peasants, shone o'er plumèd noble proud,
And selfish spirits trembled, and crushed ones cried aloud

To this bravest hero Kaiser, who for rule of judgment took,
Nor threat of sword, nor bribe of gold, nor old Justinian's book.

But "To my Master I must answer. I am Kaiser over you:
My God has made me powerful, and I owe Him service true."

Sceptred Justice sat down with him in his weather-beaten tent,
And lifted head and lightened heart, from audience with them went.

Came a messenger, hard travelled, from the sacred city's shrine,
With word of bitterest sorrow from the hills of Palestine.

"O, my son!" groaned Kaiser Friedrich, "O, my gallant heir is dead!"
And the anguish of the father bowed the hero's kingly head.

"Woe is me, my son has perished! O, my son, my son is slain!
But Christ the Lord is living! Let us on, still on, my men!

"Still His sepulchre is sacred, still His cross is put to shame,
And to victory we must struggle, for the glory of His name."

When their eager feet were planted on Calvary's mystic hill,
And gentle airs of Palestine their conquering banners fill,

As the crowning flush of triumph, as his own peculiar joy,
At the tomb of Christ the risen, Friedrich found his living boy.

CHARLES THE FIFTH AND THE SWALLOW.

WRITES that curious chronicler Vieyray:
The Emperor Charles the Fifth one day
To his trusty Squire-at-arms did say,
"To-morrow we start on a new foray,
And our soldiers' camp must move away;
But this tent of mine shall planted stay,
And its top be crowned by our colors gay,
Though no living soul be left behind
To mark them fluttering in the wind."

The Squire thus answered the royal word:
"Your Majesty's tent shall not be stirred.
But I ask my wise and gracious lord
Some reason to me for this accord?
No other tent is ample and warm
To shield from the weather your slender form.
That argent emblazon greets weary eye,
And it kindles a vision of victory,
And in front of the footsore and faltering ranks,
It courage inspires, and it promises thanks
And the victor's wreath when with trumpet and drum
The conquering army with banners shall come."

"I tell thee I know this matter best,"
The Emperor answered with sudden zest.
"Blow keenest wind from the cold northwest,
Of this tent I am henceforth dispossest,
Another owner shall stand confest;
For over the door on my Emperor's crest
A little swallow hath built her nest,
And her innocent peace shall none molest.

The helpless birdie untouched shall rest;
To my pennon and tower she is welcome guest;
And this is the reason for my behest.
These silken walls of drapery good
Shall stand in the green and silent wood,
Till the mother-swallow hath fledged her brood,
And left the tent to its solitude.
The swallow hath trusted herself to me,
And shall I meet her with treachery?
The tent shall stand, and the soldiers see
How I honor my hospitality.
With sacred value I would invest
The rites of the hearth, the rites of the guest:
The weak and lowly shall safely rest
Within the shadow of monarch's breast."

The rights of the guest and the rites of the hearth
In kingly souls have a kingly worth;
And happy nobles and peasants may be
Whose king shows such faithful courtesy.
For on the morrow, in stately array,
The army and baggage trailed slowly away;
But of all that mighty, magnificent train,
The tent left behind was the greatest gain;
For it proves self-sacrifice, self-control,
And that Charles the Fifth had a royal soul.

THE WEALTHY WOOER.

You stand by my side so calm,
While I hardly dare to breathe;
Let me take your soft cool palm,
For my pulses throb and seethe.

I offer you all my heart,
I lay my life at your feet;
Away from my side you start!
Do you fear to love me, sweet?

Do you dare to take my love,
So much and so mighty in force,
Its power to tenderly prove,
And sail through life on its course?

I give you all of the soul
Which my Maker gave to me;
Will you give me back your whole,
And keep what I give so free?

To exchange pledge-gift with me
Means your heart, your soul, your life;
The dear promise sweet and free
Of true husband and true wife.

I ask no reluctant bride
That marries at mother's beck;
Dead slave to living man tied,
Will hang and drag round his neck.

My wealth may vanish in air,
My gold may scatter like cloud;
My wife must my troubles share,
And love me when troubles crowd.

Do you love me a little, dear?
Then I gladly am your slave;
Look out of your eyes so clear,
And grant me the love I crave!

Yet so cold, so proud, so calm ;
  Let me look within your eyes.
Ah, love, those tears are my balm ;
  I ask no sweeter replies.

Did I scold you too much, dear,
  And frighten you as I wooed?
Did I grieve you in my fear
  That I was not understood?

O love, forgive me. I know
  I am poor, though wealth me girds ;
Make me rich before you go —
  Say you love me — dearest words!

A HISTORY.

TOO SOON.

Too early it came — the grave purpose of life,
  Interrupting her dream.
In the flush of youth's glory, to tabor and pipe,
  She floated down stream.

He. "Take passage, young spirit, the gondola waits ;
  You cannot too soon."
She. "Ah, to float is so sweet ; leave me with my mates,
  And the roses of June."

He. "The shores will grow dreary, thy mates will embark ;
  Refuse not the boon ! "
She. "To row makes me weary, the gondola 's dark,
  And I like not your tune."

He. "Sweet, leave with us the dainty shore's safe mooring;
Brave tides beckon on;
The stronger currents we might be securing,
Soon they will be gone."

She. "You rudely urge me up the rushing river!
Let me only drift!
Those eddying rapids make me shrink and shiver;
The oars I cannot lift."

She. "'Tis the heyday of rapture, of fancy's bright glow —
For me never wait."

He. "Ah, pretty blind one — you will reap as you now sow,
This is the hour of Fate."

TOO LATE.

She. "Ah me, the happy gifts I slighted
When I was young!
All toil and trouble me affrighted,
While joy bells rung.

"That voyage now shows nothing to alarm me, —
Place might I win;
The roses hid the thorns that harm me;
O, take me in!"

He. "Too late! The moment's past for favor,
Fixed is thy fate.
Flowers lose their freshness and their savor, —
You are too late!

"Too late! the rowing tune is well nigh over,
Your strength is gone.
Never in December blooms the clover —
Day has one dawn."

Penitent for lost hours, makes she moaning —
Fatal behavior —
Never, never can there be atoning —
Time has no Saviour!

THE CURSE OF GLAM-SIGHT.

AN ICELANDIC LEGEND.

THE herdsman Grettlir, called the Strong — sad dower
Of strength and pain allied —
Wrestled all night with treacherous Glam — troll power —
From dusk to morning tide.
By lonely seashore in the kine's hay tower
They fought night long.
In changeful shapes came back the goblin sour
To do him wrong.
Nor did the evil creature cower,
Baffled returning every hour;
O'er the spent hero did he lower
Cruelly strong.

A cheerful jocund man of stalwart height,
Who laughed at white bear's claw,
For his dear herds he gave his matchless might,
Feeling no coward awe.
But Grettlir's eyes after that saddest night
Dread phantoms saw.

They no more knew dear friends aright;
With hidden flaw
Was marred their power of seeing light,
Was changed their full-orbed vision bright
Into the horrors of that mystic fight,
By some dark law.

But after this uncertain conflict, pride
Shone no more in his face.
His trenchant thoughts and words were all tongue-tied,
He brooded o'er disgrace.
For ever present, close to Grettlir's side
The Goblin ran.
Never again from it can he divide
Ghost-haunted man.
Clinging enchantments round him glide,
Never alone from morn to eventide,
Unblinking eyes with him abide,
Glam's cursèd ban.

Icelandic story! Fable never dies,
It lives and breathes to-day;
Such conflicts in the hours of darkness rise
Through all our mortal way.
For Glam, troll sour, who twisted Grettlir's eyes,
Lives with us yet.
Glam lends us sight; what treacherous disguise
On all is set!
He glares at us with lidless eyes,
No flight from him can we devise,
Never can we his power surprise,
Nor him forget.

We think our strength no evil can molest,
We wear a coat of mail,

But in the battle how we tremble lest
The Kobold should prevail!
Our potency is tried with crucial test,
Sorrow we fight,
Held to her cold invulnerable breast
With Titan might,
Her ceaseless strain gives us no rest.
To suffer is great Love's behest,
Pain is of Love invited guest,
As after day comes night.

Within night's heavy darkness round us thrown,
With bated panting breath,
We know that flesh of flesh and bone of bone
Belongs to cruel Death.
He never leaves us with ourselves alone
This comrade dread,
Dismayed we hear all through the night a groan
From our sweet dead.
And throbbing wounds we ever own
Which thrill and bleed. A silent moan
Of speechless woe in look and tone
Lurks in our bed.

Like easy Grettlir cast on coast where lay
The iceberg's crunching feet,
The sullen roar of breakers at their play
Makes happy hours more sweet.
But wretched welcome greets the break of day
When fiends have won.
Haunted by horror thoughts, at dawn we say,
Why comes the sun?
Still when we kneel and weary pray
Glam-eyes, O dread eyes, go away!

Eyes, vacant staring eyes still stay;
Lids they have none.

All dazed and blind with shadows, each thing bright
Pierces with keenest pain;
The sudden sunshine wounds us with affright
As sword-cut in the brain.
Our eyes, like Grettlir's after his hard fight,
Dream-spectres see.
The sky no more looks clear and light
With bounty free.
The rose is no more fair to sight,
Lilies have lost their crowns of white,
The day is cheerless as the night—
Blank misery.

Our saga gospels break these vigils old,
Whose shadow surely pales;
Death lays the heated warrior in cool mould,
Our God an angel hails;
Our dear white Christ with evil spirits rolled
Glam down to hell;
Of bitter bondage to Troll-sorrow cold,
He breaks the spell.
Poor herdsman Grettlir! No scald told
Him shuddering in Kobold's nightmare hold,
Of the good Shepherd, in whose fold
Fear bids farewell.

CLASSIC SUBJECTS.

ARIADNE IN THE TEMPLE.

BETRAYED, deserted, utterly bereft,
On Naxos' isle I lay.
A lovelorn maiden by a false king left,
I stole within the sea rock's cleft
To hide my shame away.

Trait'ress to loving friends who trusted me,
I loved a traitor's face!
O, Father Minos, sweet Pasiphaë,
Why did I with base Theseus flee?
He was not worth the grace.

When suddenly I saw a glorious one
Before me stand, and say:
"Daughter, why shrinkest thou from the sweet sun,
Why from thy lover dost thou run?
Listen to me, I pray:

"Thou hast the godlike power to love and lose
Thyself in the beloved one;
Base Theseus did thy providence abuse,
Thy wealth consume, thy bounty use,
Yet thou art not undone."

Then graceful leaped at his calm, silent beck,
A tawny spotted pard;

Vine leaves and tendrils wreathed his curving neck,
The foam of vintage seemed to fleck
His sides of wine-dark sard.

His velvet paws curled in and out with joy;
His topaz eyes with beryl lights
Softened before the glance of kingly boy;
With a loud purr, half fond, half coy,
He crouched down in his might.

The beauteous creature fawned upon his king,
Lithe bounding with fierce grace;
Turning and twisting now with mighty spring,
Upon the sands himself did fling,
Seeking his lord's embrace.

See, love, thy courser wild yet tame to thee!
His strength obeys the rod.
'Twas Bacchus, who now bending on one knee,
His tender homage gave poor me, —
I knew the conquering God.

On my wan face I felt his warm smile beam;
His clustering vine-wreathed hair
Floated in rings upon his forehead's dream,
Waved down his shoulders, ebon stream,
How large he was, and fair!

The leopard is the creature of his will,
Its nature is like wine:
Bound in strong chains it gives a beauty-thrill,
But loose and raging, it may kill
The life that is divine.

Then mounted I my leopard, which on sand
Stept with a quiet pace;
I left the desolate unhappy strand,
I sailed to this loved savior land,
And here I find my place.

A priestess in the temple of my God,
I worship him I love;
I pour to him libations on the sod;
I twine his magic thyrsus rod;
These garlands, see, I wove.

In place of earthly love's disgrace and shame,
I choose the heavenly way;
Here on the altar keep the sacred flame,
Here worship I my Bacchus' name,
Here now my vows I pay.

RESERVE.

CLYTIE, from your carved bracket look you down
With angelic salutation;
Serene yet festal calms your white face crown
Through whirling time's mutation.

Thou of classic statues art most human,
Thy face shows nature royal;
Thou wast tender girl, and loving woman,
Sincerely, fondly loyal.

Almost divine thou art. On its verges
Lingering in august fashion,

Thy goddess soul its tabernacle urges
With still celestial passion,

Dost thou miss thy Sun-god's loving presence,
Or from rash wooing shrinking,
Hide in thy rich heart its subtlest essence,
Far from all careless drinking?

Seraphic Modesty! Thou fine creature,
Shyly the shadow loving;
I would not lift the veil from each sweet feature,
Thy reticence removing.

PALMER'S MARBLES.

FROM out the stores of long ago,
Greece lends the Apollo to our gaze;
And Egypt's ages proudly show
The Sphinx's grandeur for our praise.

The Archer stands with eager grace,
So restless is the statue's air,
In motion seems the marble face,
And breezes lift the clustering hair.

Instinct with life and youthful fire,
You listening, wait some fuller sign;
The bow is bent and strung the lyre,
Types of activity divine.

Colossal 'mid the desert sands,
Indifferent to the march of time
Braving decay, mysterious stands
The giant Sphinx's front sublime.

Those lips so firm, so calmly prest,
The broad composure of that brow,
The stony silence of that rest,
Which sleep and dreams both disavow;

The frigid fixedness of eye,
And all the marks of deep repose,
Suggest the truths which underlie
Victorious wills and vanquished woes.

These marbles, various in design,
Unite these two great thoughts in one;
Rest and activity combine,
And Greece and Egypt both are won.

'Tis Christian art alone may claim
This mystic union so divine,
With childlike trust the angelic flame
Of active service peaceful shines.

The steadfast heart which stayed above,
No agony of conflict shows;
But, steeped in mysteries of love,
An inward calm and balance knows.

The joyous life and hope of *Spring*,
With *Resignation's* crown of light,
The *infant Flora* blossoming,
The *Vision of the Spirit's Flight.*—

These carved ideals thou hast wrought
Are gifts, O artist! wise and good;
Which, vivid with celestial thought,
Our souls enrich with ripest food.

HEREDITARY CUSTOM.

Micare digitos, "To flash fingers:"
The modern game of "Morra."

A PICTURE.

ROAR, grimace, and grin —
Who shall win!
Howl and gesticulate,
Rave at your mate!
Quite at my ease,
I watch, I watch
The old game, still the same.
"Duo, quinque, tres," —
Which Roman soldiers played
In their Thermopolia,
While they measured and weighed
The battle's spolia.
See — how long
Customs outlive empires strong!
Roman fierce, Italian tame,
Love alike this simple game;
Human nature is the same, —
And the English school-boys name
It "Odd and Even." 'Tis the same, —
From old Rome it came.

TESSERA HOSPITALIS:[1]

THE GUEST TOKEN.

ROMANS, their own or conquered lands did lace
And bind with solid, ample, well-built roads;
But on their lines you found no stopping place,
Nor inns were reared for traveller's abode.

So every wanderer through such homeless wild,
Before he starts takes his ancestral chain,
To find the tokens, which his father's child
Can show in distant lands, and *hospes* gain:

"This ivory bit I in Damascus use,
This golden link in Smyrna will they know,
This oaken carving I must not confuse
With chestnut image sent me from the Po."

So standing by the Arno's lonely side,
Two youths, in parting, their guest tokens change:
"See, friend, how mirrored in this crystal tide
Is every cloud or tree within its range.

"So shall our Memory mirror in her glass
All the dear heaven and nature of our love;

[1] Guest Tokens, to insure hospitality in distant countries, were anciently exchanged between friends or families. These tokens were always recognized, even though presented after the separation of years, and by the great-grandchildren of the original givers. These *tessaræ* were always made exactly alike, and also peculiar in themselves: sometimes of gold set with jewels, or of rare stones carved; but a more romantic gift was the halves of a broken elder twig, which could not be copied, as the broken fibres alone would match.

Nor shall they ever from her presence pass,
  But in the depths remain, our truth to prove.

"Thou art my *hospes* always, and I thine;
  Hang now this olive *tessera* round thy neck:
I choose this homely wood, not carvings fine,
  Its natural cleavage shall it always fleck.

I wear my half, and I will come to thee
  Across the mountain forests of cold Gaul;
Numantia cannot hide thee, nor rough sea" —
  And now upon each other's necks they fall.

Who are these old men with the scanty hair,
  Gazing bewildered at each wrinkled face?
Both round their throats an olive *tessera* wear,
  Which nervously they fumble. In strange place,

Among strange people, speaking alien tongue,
  They watch, in hopes that by their boyhood token
Some friendly chance may throw them yet among
  Friends, who their native speech may once have spoken.

They meet — in each eye flashed familiar look;
  Behind the snowy beards, beneath the wrinkles,
Came an expression which them backward took
  To Arno's flowing side. The same smile twinkles —
And in close grasp each trembling hand they shook.

"See, friend, thy *tessera* hung about my neck —
    Worn tiny speck."
And answering back, the other drew his chains,
    "Here — mine remains.

"It has been worn through summer and through winter,
Smooth is the splinter;
Yet it has never left my throbbing heart
Since we did part."
"Ah, friend, though years have past, to me
Thou'rt faithful, — I to thee!"

MALACHITE AND TURQUOIS.

VENUS and Vulcan quarreled one day;
Said Venus to Vulcan, half earnest, half play:

"You spend your days in underground mine,
While I love the light and the bright sunshine.

"I love this space, and freedom, and room,
You bury yourself in a living tomb.

"You gravely talk of the metals' use:
Use, with beauty left out, is but abuse.

"Come live with me in this upper air,
And rest your dim eyes in the light so fair.

Sooty and old, from the smithy came
Vulcan, as ever, grim, ugly, and lame,

And said, "You know not, fair lady mine,
How rich ores beneath the dull earth shine.

"We working husbands for beauty pay,
My peace I will make in a pleasant way.

"Don't quarrel, my dear, with my copper mine,
It shall give you a gem which shall combine

"This Beauty and Use, so wedded in one;
Divorce is only destroying the stone."

He brought her next day a malachite,
Its rich green lustre her keen eyes delight.

"See now, this stone I have cut in halves,
And my workmen from one a chalice carves.

"The other half I will set in gold,
And chase its bossed borders in richest mold.

"This on your white neck and arms shall rest,
A dainty contrast of color confest."

Fair Venus smiled: "Fixed in stone I see
The curling, green waves of my mother sea.

"I think of the foam from which I sprung,
And the chanting tides that my birth-morn sung.

"But I cannot always wear sea-green,
Although I'm a blonde, it would be too mean."

(Perhaps some beautiful women to-day
The very same thing to their husbands say.)

Shrewd Vulcan rejoiced o'er his smiling queen,
And with kisses welcomed her altered mien.

"You shall have change of color, don't fear;
Copper mines are not exhausted, my dear."

He brings to her then some turquois, as blue
As her heavenly eyes of violet dew.

"These forget-me-nots become your waist,
A cestus of beauty in honor placed.

"And now, my darling, just look and see
That these flowers can never withered be.

"These jewels, with color so richly dyed,
Unchanged from ages to ages abide.

"Beauty and Use together are met,
Sweet Venus must never strong Vulcan forget.

"Let Use woo Beauty, a smiling bride,
And never again from each other divide.

"For Use is a king, he governs all;
And Beauty a queen, and not a born thrall."

HYPNOS, ONEIROS, THANATOS.

THERE are three friends that through hard Fate
Console the wretched, poor, proscribe;
Immortals, they on mortals wait,
Nor leave them at king's beck or bribe.
Sleep, Dream, and Death, will not abate
Their tender care. Through charmèd gate,
With softest steps and wings all furled,
They lead the sufferer to new world.
Sweet Sleep steals in, the laughing boy,
Half languid, half serene, half coy;

With wreaths of jasmine round he throws
Soft poppy crowns of white and rose;
His subtle odors soothe the pain
Of aching heart or weary brain.
Then radiant Dream gray shadow turns
To silvery nimbus — aureoles shine!
His brows are wreathed with flowering fern.
Half ebony his staff — midline
Pieced out with ivory. Hence we learn
That sad dreams flow from the dark half;
But when white waves, calm sleepers laugh
And coo in dreams, their answering note
To soft sweet dreams that round them float.
Such alchymy these angels use,
They iron griefs to gold transfuse.
In starry white and golden robes,
Laden with purple amaranth globes,
With hands full of pale asphodels —
How fragrant drop their amber bells —
Death comes so calm and colorless,
With his great rest, poor souls to bless.
Gods of the night, gods of the grave,
Ye pity men, ye mortals save!

JANUARY — JANUS, THE DOOR-KEEPER.

O MONTH of two-faced name! Thou link betwixt
The Old and New Year; with a double nature
Thou sittest in the valley, looking back
At the worn paths of sister months who faded
Before thy solemn presence; and forward
Thou lookest up the hill, where mistily
Float prophetic shadows of the coming

Honored eleven who bear thy snowy train.
One face of thine is sad with parting; its
Tender eyes cling to pale Memory's ghosts,
So soon to vanish in Chaos and old
Night's domain. Thy other gladsome beckoning
Face is full of Hope and Welcome, looking
Through the wreathing snow and ice of winter
To where on hill-top sits fair June, flower-crowned,
The summer's queen. The chillness of thy valley
And the heats of hot July meet in her
Breath, and waft her temperate sweets,
Blended in equal harmonies of warmth and cool.
So in thy vale, O new-born January,
Thou takest thy firm seat, and holdest fast
Thy Janus keys, which may unlock the doors
Of Hope and Memory alike. Door-keeper
For us mortals, grant me this wish: to pass
With glad and equal steps back through thy twofold
Gates, with ready ease to memories dear,
And gayly, freshly forth to fondest hopes.

LOST OPPORTUNITY.

In Daphne's myth a god pursues;
With fire and flame Apollo woos;
The maiden shrinks from martyr fate,
Her soul dies out, — she finds too late,
Her life henceforth is vegetate.

The thick bark closes round her heart;
The hard roots from her soft limbs start;
Her sweet hands lose their tender touch,

You would not dream they had been such,
The tough rind wraps them round so much.

Ah, parable with history rife!
Ah, prisoned breath and shrouded life!
Unuttered voices buried lie,
Choked is all sound of groan or cry,
You hear nor sob nor stifled sigh.

We dare not welcome the god's will!
We choose the safe, we shrink from ill;
And round our souls the muffling bark
Creeps thick and hard; our eyes are dark, —
No longer can they God's sky mark.

And thorny grow our pliant fingers,
Nor human kindness in them lingers;
The warm blood turns to tepid sap;
To stiff rough trunk our brooding lap;
Plant-nature all our life doth wrap.

All pulseless henceforth is that life
Which once — with ruddy heart-blood rife —
Shone in the look, the smile, the eye;
The godhood once we have passed by,
And spoiled is all our destiny.

A MORAL CLASSIC.

You mourn your husband's public life;
You long to see his face at home;
How can he seek such toil and strife,
The battle's roar, the breaker's foam!

Come, sit you down, and look with me
  Upon these tints so clear and bright;
Within this painting you may see
  Your story told in radiant light.

Old Titian wrought this classic tale
  Of Venus and Adonis' love.
Her soft imploring looks will fail —
  For see, the hunt starts through the grove.

The hounds pull hard upon his hand,
  He lingers in her tender arms;
The ringing horns can he withstand,
  Or leave his goddess's graceful charms?

He bursts away! Ah, let him go!
  Fair Venus, 'tis his natural life, —
Hand him his spear, his shield, his bow, —
  This is the office of a wife.

But you remember all the rest:
  The boy's sad fate, the woman's grief,
The frantic hounds, the god's behest,
  The roses crimsoned on each leaf.

'Tis true, yet nobler was his life
  And better far than sweetest dreams;
The manly courage of the strife,
  'Tis victory, although death it seems.

DEATH IN LIFE.

I WALK within enchanted ground:
Through woods and forests all around
Each tree in stifled silence stands,
Nor shakes its locks nor wrings its hands.

The poets fancied, in the trees
Were buried human sympathies;
That souls lay prisoned in the dark,
Inclosed in trunks with rind and bark.

Do strong and stately forests stand
A sleepless, lonely, captive band,
With fluttering leaves which to and fro
Their only life of motion show?

Are they not haunted by the thought
Of loss, of change, of life that 's nought?
In leaves and boughs can hidden lie
A voiceless, quivering memory?

Ah! if they might with words complain!
Such dolor in their silent pain!
Their brains to be forever numb!
Ah God! their hearts forever dumb!

Such pulseless, frigid trunk, there stands
In many houses made with hands;
Their eyes are blind, deaf are their ears,
They know not love, nor joys, nor fears.

Closed are their sources of delight;
Their instincts poor are wrapt in night;

No more sweet love they take or give:
Life without love is not to live.

Cold hands with comfort never rife,
To help is dearest part of life;—
No smiles upon their face you see,
Shut up is every sympathy.

Firewood and timber may inure,
But vegetable life is poor:
They feel not, love not, nor discern;
They're only fit to fell or burn.

The master's voice with ringing sound
Cuts down these cumberers of the ground;
Free service only will him suit;
He asks these barren boughs for fruit!

Self is the sorcerer who thus binds,
In frigid forms and hardened rinds,
The souls that might with fervent glow,
Divinest passion feel and know.

Enchanter! break this magic spell,
Teach them to love and suffer well,
To struggle bravely, failure bear:
Nothing is worse than dull self-care.

THE PORTRAIT STATUE.

O VENUS of Milo, so sweet in thy calm!
Thy beauty bewilders, yet soothes with its balm;
In love and in worship we sing thee a psalm.
How gracious thy presence, how lovely thy smile!
So restful thy look, yet so beaming the while,
Its bountiful rapture our hearts will beguile.

How radiant the woman whose face sat for you!
How tender her lustre of gray eyes or blue!
How surely the portrait was meant to be true!
The types of all beauty, the lines of all grace,
Find homes in your figure, your posing, your face,
And seem to be nestling in their fittest place.

To her, suitors bowed down; her, lovers adored,
Hung her shrine with flower offerings freely outpoured;
Her altar with frankincense precious was stored.
Yet her truest adorer was sculptor, who made
This image immortal of fair mortal maid,
And Time's and Death's ravages certainly stayed.

Yet at the deep bases of all our bright dreams
Lies dead fact. This sweetest Greek statue but seems
Portrait true of the sweetest Greek woman. Teems
The real, all full of the ideal thought
Which poet, or artist, or sculptor has wrought,
Life breathing around him, his genius has taught.

I think thy dumb silence has magical power
To kindle flame fancy, in common-place hour
To wake our dull thoughts to bud and to flower.

Thy fair possibilities dazzle our eyes,
The limits of growth seize our hearts with surprise, —
Can poor human life to such beauty uprise?

Yet as all mortal work incompleteness declares,
As short-coming failure no mortal life spares,
So thy broken image defacement still shares.
Our ideal, imperfect, or fractured still seems,
Unaccomplished our hope, blot and blur hide its gleams;
Defeated our aims, unfulfilled are our dreams.

In spite of our sorrow, our failure, our crime,
Still haunts us a presence of something sublime;
Still glitters a vision beyond passing time.
Like Venus of Milo, it gladdens our sight,
It fills our days' living with tender delight,
It raises our being toward infinite height.

TITHONUS TO AURORA.

Ah, my Aurora, with thy splendid youth
I am at war.
See, love, old age with cold and cruel ruth
My life doth mar.

Could I, as in the morning of my days,
Possess my senses,
And glory in thy beauty and glad praise
Earth's influences, —

Could I love boys and girls, and noble men,
With keen delight,
And comfort take in song and thought, O, then
All would be right.

But slow decay and weakness steady steal
On all my strength;
Nor man nor nature me delights; I feel
The day's dull length.

My youth and strength and life are gone, I crave
My final rest.
O love, unseal for me the welcome grave
For me far best.

These thoughts of latter years know no repose:
For heaven I pine;
The light that from the after life that flows
Must on me shine.

Each morn my sleepless eyes I sadly strain
For dawn's rose-line;
And as thy glorious light begins to wane
At twilight's sign;

I cast me down in restless, racking pain;
Life burdens me,
It brings me no more blessing — only bane.
O, set me free.

Not even for thy glorious love's dear sake
Would I now live.
O love! life's burden doth my spirit break,
Back I life give.

Take now the gift the gods in fondness gave
To me as thine;
Immortal life befits no mortal — nor save
The gods divine.

VERSES OF FEELING.

UNEQUAL FRIENDSHIP.

O FRIEND, thou lovest me, and I will bless
Thy love with all its bountiful excess;
Nor will I chafe and fret
Over my heavy debt.
To take is but my meetness,
To give is of your sweetness;
This is true love's completeness.

But when I to your halls and gardens come,
Never can I recount their treasure's sum:
Jewels in red gold set,
Roses with clear dews wet,
Sweet music's far-off hum,
Pictures that strike me dumb,
Your splendors me benumb.

Such toys and trifles offer I thee back,
As Poverty's bare hand need never lack:
A yellow cowslip ball,
Herbs or a whistle call,
Within thy chariot's track,
Wearing dull, dusty black,
Walk I with peddler's pack.

A happy peasant child may sometimes bring
Pebble or scented grass to please a king;

For which, though dank with mould,
He drops back coinèd gold,
Or curious carven ring;
Why should the rustic fling
Rudely away the costly thing?

I am like beggar child before your door,
Or pauper wrapt in rags. Shall I ignore
Your generous action,
Reject your benefaction,
Knowing whate'er I wore,
Within your large heart's core
You love me more and more?

Dear, if you knew the glorious, wholesome light
Your royal sunlit soul throws on my night!
Through love's divinest ray
Comes hint of dawning day;
Flushing with pleasure bright
At such a happy sight,
Loud you would laugh outright.

My friend unconscious, you cannot discern
How much I from your gentle wisdom learn,
Like sun of beaming love
Set in a heaven above.
The stars that nightly burn
Ne'er see the flowers that yearn
To yield their homage in return.

I give you only straws for all your gold,
My chips exchange with you for jewels old.
If you your signet miss,
I give you sealing kiss;

At dawn I oft behold
Manna unbought, unsold,
A free gift manifold.

Yet sometimes thoughtful, I cannot deny
Your lavish goodness wakes in me a sigh.
O, could I find a way
My heavy debt to pay!
Perhaps some by and by,
To poorer one than I,
I may have chance to try.

It is ignoble so to measure love,
When measureless God pours it from above.
Without humiliation,
With open exultation,
We in Him live and move;
Thanks humble us behoove,
As we his goodness prove.

CHANGES.

CARELESSLY playing in life's rippling shallows,
Tossing up shells and the gay pebbles rare,
Wading in brooklets to gather marsh-mallows,
Iris and flag-root were thick planted there;
Climbing the hill-tops and rough barren fallow,
Hunting for wild flowers in meadow and wood;
Feeding the young lambs and watching the callow
Young birdlings of cat-bird and shy thrush's brood, —

Caught me a tempest most wild in its madness,
Hurled me from hill-top and deep forest calms
Into old ocean, awake from its sadness,
And beating the coast rocks with cold cruel palms.
I had beheld the great sea in its gladness,
Indolent ripples wore sweetest of smiles;
How could I dream such drear craze of its badness,
How could I live — the mere sport of its wiles?

Tossed on the billows which plunging went o'er me,
Thrown in sea trough or upon the foam crest,
How could I venture to strike out before me,
How could I know which strange way was best?
There smiled no star in the black sky above me;
There came no light from the land or the sea;
But a calm voice said clear, "Only love Me,
Soon shall you safe in my sure harbor be."

O, my great Father, whose tempest so tried me,
Was it thy hand that in terror I clasped?
O, was it thy voice that seemed so to guide me,
Was it the skirts of thy garments I grasped?
Tempted by terror, constrained by deep billows,
Floated by tides, and driven by strong waves;
I laid my head down on softest of pillows,
And all my poor life now so kindly He saves.

Father omnipotent! succor me failing,
Help me to struggle when danger is near;
Effort is not in thy sight unavailing;
Thine ears are open our faint cries to hear.
When the billows again my strength are assailing,
Grant me again thy vision most clear;
Listen to all this poor mortal's sad wailing,
Rescue from danger, and wipe every tear.

MUTILATION.

I STAND and walk, and breathe and talk among you, it is true;
I give my look, my word, my smile to all that meets my view;
My hands are whole, my eyes are clear; I am the same one who
Still sits and sews, and reads and goes, as she was wont to do;
You see no change, indeed 'tis strange, and yet it's nothing new.

The soldier wears his battle scars, you see his loss of limb,
You know that he has suffered, and you gently pity him;
You see the stump within the sleeve, you mark the eye put out,
You watch the limp, or halting gait, and hear the battle shout;
The body's history is writ, you cannot blot it out.

But mutilation does not show upon our inner part:
Who knows the wounds that throb and bleed within a loving heart?
Who sees the strong right hand cut off, who knows the eye plucked out?
Who marks the feeble faltering steps with which we grope about?
Who ever thinks our life has waned since some o'erwhelming rout?

Ah, maimed and scarred, our souls would show, if suddenly in light,
The outside world could read on them the histories of our fight:
The hope cut off, the broken dream, the right hand love betrayed;
The eye put out, the breath compressed, the loving trust dismayed;
The mutilation would be plain, nor could it be gainsaid.

But the soldier glories in his scars, mourns not his eyesight dim;
He won the field, he medal wears, so what is his lost limb?
And I, who bitter conflict knew, won in my battles too,
I do not mourn my losses, for they have proved me true;
But still I wonder that no love has ever looked me through.

Perhaps 'tis best! My pulsing scars might pain another's eyes;
My quick drawn breath, when wounds are touched, might wake another's sighs;
And yet I wonder that some soul, through secret inner pain,
Has never looked right through my eyes to see the life-blood drain;
Has never marveled to itself that such deep scars remain.

BETROTHAL.

O DAY so sweet,
Speeding with noiseless feet,
Go not so fleet!
My love hath told his tale;
All of thy hours will fail,
Though counted by heart beat,
For our fond looks to meet,
To make our joy complete.

My precious day,
Flying so fast away,
I pray thee stay!
Undreamt, unasked, unsought,
This blessing thou hast brought.
Too happy to be gay,
I ask for time to pray, —
Stay with me, precious day!

Answers the day:
The year hath but one May —
One dawn the day!
Mortals, enthralled by time,
Through Love know how sublime
Is the eternal day;
A breath of endless May
Doth with all lovers stay.

Blame never fate,
If once thy soul elate,
Find lovers' gate;

Within that golden portal
Thou enterest an immortal,
Thy soul hath found its mate;
The new birth now create
Doth common life translate.

Welcome, sweet dream!
Things are not all they seem;
But in its gleam
Comes glimpse of fairer land,
Doors oped by loving hand,
Where wistfully you deem,
Shineth a fadeless beam,
Flows ever joy's full stream.

These hours must pale:
Make all of them avail
To speak love's tale;
Rejoice in thy elation,
Accept true love's dilation!
If change or death prevail,
Bury with endless wail,
But now to love, all hail!

EXPECTATION.

THE day has past, and slowly in the sky
The pale moon climbs with all her stars:
They are my signal lamps hung out on high;
No cloud their clear light mars.

I know that looking from his airy tower
Are other eyes that long to see

The restful sweetness of this twilight hour,
  Which brings him back to me.

I wander down the garden walk and see
  The glimmering beauty of the night ;
With shade and silver-shine is wrapt each tree —
  Half darkness and half light.

I see the lilies tall in shadow wait
  Till the white moon shall bring their share
Of luminous glory which, like happy fate,
  Makes every flower more fair.

In cipher might I write on moon's fair face,
  And send a message to my mate :
O moon, fair moon, do me this grace,
  Say that for him I wait !

Might I to him a herald swift now send !
  The brown bee folds his wings I know ;
Ah butterfly, plumed pinions to me lend,
  Or gray moth nimbly go,

And gently brush against his cheek and lip ;
  I think thou wouldst to him recall
That yester noon-time, when we watched thee sip
  Those plums on sunniest wall.

In rose's heart you lie in honeyed dreams ;
  I cannot lose this hour in sleep ;
No sleep so restful to my true life seems
  As this soft tryst to keep.

Sleep on, sweet wingèd things, and take your rest!
I will not burden your fine ears
With those sad sighs, half uttered, half represt,
That breathe for him my fears.

IMPATIENCE.

Ah, how much longer must I wait, must wait?
No step comes swift along the street;
Alone I listen at the latticed gate,
Where tarry his true feet.

The mellow moonlight on the pavement falls,
The roses bloom above my head;
All nature's sweetness only on me palls,
And musing low I said:

I know a messenger who swift will go
And softly breathe to him my name:
The rose's scent shall whisper to him low,
That from my heart it came.

Fly, perfume of the roses sweet, to him,
On wind of softest summer night;
Tell him I linger in the twilight dim,
Longing for his dear sight.

For when the rose's scent shall touch his brain,
So then shall float upon his thought
My memory and my waiting, yearning pain,
In whisper by thee brought.

Sweet messenger, these words of love now bear,
And speak my changeless heart and truth;
This viewless message of the silent air,
With tender subtle art,

Shall call my lover's thought and love to me,
And hither turn his truant feet.
Ah, herald, short thy graceful task, for, see!
I now my lover greet!

LOVE, THE AWAKENER.

FOLDED in youth's dim dreams I lay,
When Love's clear voice,
With clarion note foretelling coming day,
Bade me rejoice

In the new morning's dewy freshness fair,
Which me did bless,
In the serene, elastic spring-time air
Of conscious happiness!

The valley's sweetness I with him explored,
Thick with May bloom;
Gay reveries of hope the future stored,
My days illume.

Then up the mountain height he bade me climb,
That I might know
Renunciation is the great sublime
That earth can show.

Now have I known the best that life can give :
Its early flowers ;
The vital struggles of a soul, to live
Through storm and showers.

LOVE, THE TEACHER.

THE riches of the valley I have proved
Measureless gain ;
The outlook from the hill-top I have loved
Through toil and pain.

Strong purpose, steadfast action, patience true,
Which never slept ;
Youth's dreams, Love's sweetness, and his grandeur too,
Life's chords have swept.

These Love has brought me ; and how can I praise
His kindling power,
Undying flame, which still through length of days
Warms each chill hour?

He touched my eyes, and luminous my sight ;
No more in vain
I listened for mysterious tones of might,
In rhythmic strain.

The secrets of the flood and field, of light,
Of poet's song,
Of heart of hero yearning for the fight,
To him belong.

Love taught me all I know, and will bestow
From his great store
Free gifts and bounteous to poor souls, who go
And ask for more.

ASPIRATION.

We read of deeds of large renown,
We kindle with heroic fire;
We too would wear the martyr's crown,
We too would suffer and aspire.

We gaze upon the mountain's brow,
Which lonely clouds and stars befriend;
But low as we are standing now,
The self-same skies above us bend.

Our days with duties thickly sown,
Our overlooking eyes despise;
We seek in spheres beyond our own
A field of larger sympathies.

The quiet paths of common life,
With no varieties of change,
Are thick with foes and secret strife
Within their narrow household range.

The friction of each petty care,
Within the brave heart's hidden cells,
Creates the pearl of patience there,
Like pearls that grow in wounded shells.

The diamond, drop of starry light,
Distills in dark and secret mines,
Until, revealed to human sight,
On royal brows its beauty shines.

So day by day within each soul,
May precious jewels grow and round,
Until their pure and perfect whole
In Christ's own coronal are bound.

THE LESSON OF PAIN.

A CHILD, I hungered for joy;
A girl, I thirsted for love;
Nor knew their bitter alloy —
Thorns hid in soft silken glove.

My joy, my love I have had,
I seized the best of this life;
The bliss of loving is sad,
And joy can scar like a knife.

Pain held out his hard rough hand;
Mail-clad, it dealt me a blow,
Nor could I then understand
Whence came my unwonted glow.

I learned that joy's gifts alone
Would change my soul to a sieve,
That sifts out the sinew and bone
Which strength to living must give.

The sieve ejects the best wheat,
It filters out strong and good grain;
The iron and phosphates outbeat,
The force and the fibre outstrain.

I feel now the worth of pain,
I drink of its pungent draft;
My hands still show the scar-stain,
Though healing tonic I quaffed.

I prize the pangs of true love,
I know the sharp sting of joy;
Through them is Peace, treasure trove;
Peace brings no poison annoy.

For Peace I ask, and I rest
In shadowed silence of Peace;
Nor Joy nor Love is the best,
But Peace, may sweet Peace increase!

GROWTH.

A YEAR ago a baby sweet
Within our clasping arms you lay,
A year whose hours so still and fleet
Have past, and brought this winter's day.

Thy tiny hand has learned to hold,
Thy pattering feet climb up the stair,
And features, infantine in mould,
Maturer lights and shadows wear.

Each day has brought some silent change,
While we unconscious looked and loved;
No watching keen, no insight strange,
Has taught us how the spirit moved.

So year by year the growth will come,
So hidden from our eager gaze,
Until within this cherished home
Full grown thou stand'st for blame or praise.

As those who by an opening rose,
The swelling bud delighted see,
Yet cannot note its leaves unclose,
To set its floating fragrance free;

We stand by thee, beloved child,
And watch the flowering of thy soul;
We scent the sweetness rich and mild,
And wait the blossom's rounded whole.

Content, with loving, trusting heart,
To shelter thee from storm and blight,
While sun and dew with genial art
Develop thee to beauty bright.

So shalt thou grow fair nature's flower,
Blest by the earth, the air, the sky,
With best of all, for thy soul's dower,
Deep reverence for God's deity.

We ask of Him, thy Father good,
With holy love thy soul to fill;
Above thee may his spirit brood,
And sway thee to his sovereign will.

So shall thy growth and promise fair
Fulfill sweet promises of light,
And in his record book thy share
Shall shine in words of purest white.

THE BOOK OF LIFE.

My baby, thy soft eyes of blue
Are full of prophecy;
Their merry flash is ever new,
Their mellow sunshine, melting through
The tender tears which softly sue,
Foretell a soul of fire and dew;
I smile and then I sigh.

My darling, to thy baby eyes
Life is a book all writ
In unknown language, wherein lies
The future hid in close disguise.
The spells of love, and song, and sighs,
The fire that gleams, the light that flies,
Are pictures hid in it.

This book is yet unpierced with glance,
And sealed with many seals;
No eye, if keen as keenest lance,
Can search within. Perhaps advance
Illumined hours in rapturous dance,
Or blotted page shows sad romance:
Time only this reveals.

Each vacant page will open white ;
Then at the close we see
Some glitter with flame words of light,
And some are black with sorrow's night,
And some are scarred with desperate fight,
And some may be a blank to sight,
A deep, sad mystery.

O, baby with the hair of gold!
How glad I am those eyes
The limits of the nursery hold !
They see no shadows grim and cold,
But rest their gaze, so baby bold,
On each rose tint the hours enfold,
With mild, sweet, gay surprise.

THE DIFFERENCE.

SAID my little daughter to me one day :
" I like among the flowers to play,
But I better like to weed ;
Mayn't I, mamma ? " says she, pleading
For the privilege of weeding.
" But my dear, can you succeed ?
In the garden
We will walk,
Pulling now and then
A stalk
Of weed that thrusts its vigorous head
Fearless in the mellow bed ;
And unabashed would gladly stay,
Though the choked flowers for rescue pray."

Said the little girl to me,
In ecstasy,
" Mamma see ! I've learned to-day
The difference between grass and lily ;
I shall never be so silly
As to pull up lily-root,
Thinking it is only grass.
" See, mamma, I lilies pass,
And Paul cannot hoot
At my mistakes any more,
And my weeding will you suit.
See, I do it o'er and o'er:
This is grass, and *this* is lily,"—

Ah, my little Milly,
You begin to see
With your own eyes not mine —
A sad thought to me ;
For my baby I resign:
She sees a difference,
And the joy divine
Of baby life — intense —
Which laughs at all
Both great and small,
Nor sees degrees,
Has past — so fast —
In a trice
She slipped from Paradise.
Good and evil she acquires,
Knows and desires,
Chooses what she uses ;
In this hour, maturer power
With shadow lowers,
And her thoughtlessness devours.

But the light which illumes
At the same time consumes
The blind joy
Of the baby girl, or boy.

THE TOP-SPINNING.

My fountain of frolic is dry to the brim,
My wit now goes halting in every shrunk limb,
Revulsion has come, this is gravity's hour —
I hope my grave poem wont prove a great bore.
I know it 's a muddle of very crude ore;
By smelting, in fining and sifting machine,
Some grains of pure metal you scarcely can glean,
Some grains not of gold or of silver, but tin.
Now after this proem, my poem begin.

I watch my dear boy with his humming top
Playing upon the marble floor;
He lashes the toy till it leaps with a hop,
Then staggers and rolling comes to a stop
To fall, and the game is o'er.

He tries once again the gay top to spin;
The toy starts on its whizzing course,
Poised sure its swift motions steady begin,
And eddying circles quicker haste win,
Till it whirls in fullest force.

The lad's bright eyes flashed full of joys,
And his merry face lights to see

The whirling go on with such equipoise,—
With so little motion and quite without noise
The top spins most perfectly.

O, my idle heart, take that lesson home!
From the top learn life-games to play;
Thy wish and endeavor but froth in foam,
Thy purposes falter, thy footsteps roam
In erring or doubtful way.

Thy tides bear no freighted argosies' sails,
They rise and they fall with the moon;
Strange currents set in, winds of passion blow gales,
Circumstance limits and custom prevails,
And life is so near high noon.

Henceforth from this hour, like the top, take a start
With a wiser and riper plan;
Let the hurrying motion of life impart
A deeper restfulness to the full heart,
A central peace to the man.

And busied, yet calm in every days' hour,
Let the heart and the hand still be
The hastening progress of blossoming flower,
That the hurry of life should enfold the power
Of tranquil intensity.

THE BLIND STAG OF MEROPÈ.

TURNING his blind side toward the sea,
The stately stag of Meropè
  Grazed, with his one keen eye upon the hills
From whence the hunters come, and snuffing free
The untainted air, tossed his proud head,
And antlers wide in noble branches spread :
" See now, the might of an unconquered will,"
Proudly self-confident, his nostrils fill,
  Watchful, defiant. What thrills
Of agony when those cunning men,
Leaving the pastures broad within his ken
Unvisited, took boats and came by sea,
And caught the stateliest stag of Meropè.
" Men are too strong for me," he said,
And bowed in death his royal head.

Sweet peace and plenty smiled upon my life;
And hid away from restless care
In household dream, I saw no snare
Nor pitfall dark. Struggle and strife
Left me alone, when like a knife,
Went through each nerve a sudden pain,
A mortal pang in heart and brain.
  My open eyes stared round, but from the sky
In clearest daylight, fell the bolt,
No use of mad revolt;
  The lightning was too swift, I lie
Stricken and dumb. My anxious sight
  No flash of threatening terror saw;

Secure in sunshine and a calm delight,
  Our safety showed no flaw.
The hunter Sorrow sought my blindest side :
O stag, poor beast, to thee I am allied.

DIVERSION.

How can I pass these weary hours,
  When Grief and I must sit together ;
How gladden her sad eyes with flowers,
  And tempt her out in sunny weather ?
The world seems filled with darkling showers,
  And she, like lamb bound with a tether,
A helpless lamb, whose timid powers
  Keep her from wandering in the heather.

Lone one, let thy dim eyes brighten
  At the morning's tender shining ;
When the sails the broad bay whiten
  As they pass and melt, refining —
Till from dark shapes slow they lighten ;
  Till gray shadows they resigning,
Fade in light ; nor can we tighten
  Strained sight 'gainst cloud's silver lining.

Gray canvas, which seems heavy, cold,
  When flapping dully close to shore,
If broadly to brave winds unrolled,
  Light, buoyant, flutters more and more ;
Sunstruck, its gloomy masses bold
  In shining distance seem to soar,
White visions in the blue and gold,
  Sky birds with wings horizon o'er.

In the heart-world, Grief, in passing,
Fades in light as it recedeth ;
Bleached and pure, self no more glassing,
Staining anguish no more bleedeth.
As a soiled sail in group massing,
Motion's charm and distance needeth,
Flight brings rest from grief's harassing,
Old thought yields when new scene pleadeth.

Grief's black drapery darkens eyesight,
(Weary eyes are not discerning)
Vaults are dim with cherished lamplight,
Howe'er long those lamps are burning.
Far off outside the sun shines bright,
(Gravestones teach us little learning)
In radiant sunshine angels white
Their silver wings are floating, turning.

THE LIVING SOUL.

"He shall save his soul alive."—EZEK. xviii. 27.

O, SAVE my soul alive! the prophet said,
Put forth thine hand and take my life;
This body, waste and worn in mortal strife,
Will gladly droop its weary head,
And rest and refuge seek among the silent dead.
Let sight, and sound, and pulse, and strength abate ;
Yet for my soul, my radiant friend and mate,
I crave yet fuller life and power illuminate.
Thou mad'st man in thine image, Father, God!
But slay the soul, the body 's but a clod,
A cast-off garment, a deserted tent,

Resolved into its native element.
I lay in valley low of groveling sense,
She roused me from my selfish indolence,
And forced me up the toiling mountain's steep,
With sting and spur and goad of aspiration keen,
Till on the topmost peak I sometimes lean
Undizzied and strong-willed, and breathing deep
Of the pure ether, like a king elate,
Regnant o'er ease, large-hearted for all fate.
Her sweetness, tender grace to this mean body lent,
As rounded limbs gleam white through coarse habiliment,
And all that 's good and all that 's fair, I knew;
From her brave teachings every lesson grew.
She touched mine eyes, mine ears; I saw, I heard;
The heavens declared to me their wondrous word.
And tuned she then my harp to sweet accord,
To sing in holy, reverent praise of Thee, O Lord!
O, save my soul alive! My spirit prays
No more for wealth, or conquest, length of days;
So let my body die, which but delays
Her vital powers of swift development,
And cumbers, clogs, and baffles all her ways.
Unwrap her lendings, doff her accidents,
Unloose the real, in the actual pent.
The chrysalis, she 's waited fourscore years
Each hour the bursting of her cell; the larva nears
Her form resplendent, her ecstatic flight,
When spirit-winged she floats in clearest light.
Unbar her prison to this sweet release.
But Maker good and wise! O, do not cease
To save my soul alive, my deathless soul!
For her let still eternal ages roll,
Kindle her flames anew, her altar-light refine;
Her gifted instincts, human and divine,

Enrich with odors, bathe with oil and wine,
Till purged by fire, her sacrifice shall shine
Less poorly for thy praise, thy glorious name
To honor, which my chiefest aim
For earth or heaven, I would forever claim.

"IN THY LIGHT SHALL WE SEE LIGHT."[1]

FATHER of light, the dawn begins;
Thick are the curtains of our sins;
In silence through the shuddering night
We wait and watch for morning light.

Our puny torches fade and die
Before thy sun's resplendent eye;
The paths of light we dream we see
Are darkness, differing in degree.

Break up these clouds of worldly sense;
Tear off all draperies of pretense;
The fogs of doubt wilt thou dispel;
Of drowsy slumbering break the spell.

If self blots out our vision's power,
Short-sighted mortals of the hour,
Cleanse our blurred sight, our eyelids purge,
And to immortal limits urge.

The skulking demons of the night,
Thy shining turns to angels white;
Before thy path black shadows run,
They cannot face thy blaze, O Sun!

[1] Ps. xxxvi. 9.

Our barren lives with light caress,
That bloom and verdure may us bless ;
Bathe us in sunlight, that we be,
Like ripened fruit, more fit for thee.

Mellow this hard and stony soil,
Enrich it with our spirit toil ;
Pluck up the weeds so thickly set,
Plant wholesome herbs with thy dews wet :

Or if thy stimulating power
Makes our dull hearts to burst in flower,
O let sweet perfume from them rise,
As incense, for thy sacrifice.

Under thy searching noontide ray,
Our sun-stained souls submissive lay ;
Bleach us to whiteness — gentle rains
Of penitence will cleanse our stains.

Like sunshine on the senseless earth,
Thy light illumes our soul's cold dearth ;
All offices of Nature's sun
By thy warm love are far outdone.

THE DUMB SOUL.

"SHE hath a dull cold nature," her mates said;
"No life glows in her heart or brain ;
She feels no love, no joy, no peace, no pain."
Nor knew they that her soul asked of them bread
And wine in sacrament, and greedy drank
Their scanty gifts, nor gave a sign to thank.

A land-locked pond lies open to the sky,
And sun and shadow fleck its mystery;
But on its barren beach no verdure grows,
From out its stagnant depths no outlet flows;
Its weedy depths of thick and turbid pool
Smile not nor sparkle as clear water cool,
Nor float there tiny fleets of lily pad.
When rushing brooks pass by in gurgling play,
When rivers broadly sweep to seashore bay,
Bearing great ships of merchant opulence,
The dull pond stays within its swamp's defense.
Like this slow tarn, no outlet has her sense.
Her dumb soul stagnates in its silence sad,
She clear discerns her natural impotence,
She knows her dullness, but can never say,
"I live, I feel, love me dear friends I pray!"
Passive reception is her wonted mood,
Responsive utterances her grasp elude;
Brave words their might to her deny,
Though after them her longing soul may cry.
Reflection silent, slow, alone is hers.
She hears, she sees, but never can express;
For faculty of speech doth not her bless.
Ah, if with voice she full expression had,
And flooding feeling floating music bade!
She hath no gift of song nor artist touch,
But frozen silence wraps her powers. Ah, such
Voiceless victims suffer — spare these slurs —
Born dumb in soul, not deaf. Remember much
She hears but can nought say, nor her oppress
With cruel comment. She cannot confess
The thought and love and pain which in her stirs.

UNGIFTED WITH EXPRESSION.

You win your love with careless ease ;
  You wear it as you wear a flower,
Worn at your breast your sight to please,
  Thrown by as faded in an hour,
Like cup that 's empty to its lees.

So soon you win, so soon throw by —
  Ah ! might I share your winsome gift,
And lovely charm of look and eye
  For one brief day, my heart would lift
Its thanks for all eternity.

I would amass such store of love,
  I would enrich my lonely life
With wealth which I would keep and prove
  With vital blessings ever rife,
And know I'd found life's treasure trove.

But I am silent, dull, and shy ;
  I dare not smile, I cannot sing.
So each gay heart will pass me by,
  And to your smile their flowers they fling,
While I must sit alone and sigh.

I sigh — that makes me duller yet ;
  While you, like bird of gayest wing,
Still flutter glad, and still forget
  The flowers that you away did fling ;
I grieve, I weep, I almost fret.

Yet, darling, see — this is my sting,
And working bee a sting must wear —
Perhaps some day may come a king
And glad with me his kingdom share,
And I may wear the bridal ring.

Then that will be more dear to me
Than all the flowers you careless win;
It will so ever sacred be,
That I should hold it as a sin
To be so charming, sweet, and free;
And then I would not change with thee,
I know I would not change with thee.

TO F. F.

THE RESPONSIVE SOUL.

ELASTIC as the spring-time air,
And permeant as the soft sunshine,
To every soul she seems most fair,
Of each man's thought she seems a sign.

So radiant is her look and smile,
So prescient is her word and tone,
That each fond heart she can beguile
To think his thoughts are all her own.

But 'tis not guile, and 'tis not art,
That weaves this charm that none can brook,
But larger pulse of feeling heart,
And quicker sight, and sweeter look.

Like Nature she, whose loving soul
Can mirror all that moves the thought;
No bounds her sympathies control,
Nor limits are to instinct brought.

And so like song-bird she doth sing
With voice that ever ringeth clear;
Like Nature's daylight, she doth bring
Revealing, sunlit atmosphere.

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[1] HLAEFDIGE.

ALL language has encountered change;
No word has found its utmost range;
Old words take meanings new and strange.

Hlaefdige, in the Saxon tongue,
Meant *bread-giver*, to old and young;
What change upon the word is rung!

The Saxon dames the "day's loaf" bring;
"Service is glory," their bards sing,
Hlaefdige must her bounties fling.

Lady means now a work of art;
She may have mind, she may have heart,
But manners are the better part.

[1] Lord is from the Anglo-Saxon hlâford (hlâfveard), bread-ward or bread-master, and by implication *bread-giver;* the feminine form is *hlaefdige* (*hlâfveardige*) whence comes the English word *lady*.

Those sweet fine germs of natural power,
Which ripen character's full flower,
Behind a painted mask must cower.

Wears she not silk nor velvet gown,
The world no lady marks her down;
Plain garments earn its coldest frown.

O, young girl! fresh, and warm, and sweet,
With lovers kneeling at your feet,
O, be a lady, full, complete.

A *bread-giver* to all the poor,
Not merely those who haunt the door;
The parlor vagrants need bread more:

The lame in thought, the halt of will,
The blind, the maimed, your boudoirs fill;
Gay murderers — old Time they kill.

The starved in mind, the poor in speech,
The hungry soul, your bounties reach;
Cold hearts, dull lives, your help beseech.

Ah, nourish them; impoverished band,
They welcome largess from your hand;
You will not sow upon the sand.

Nor shall the thorns your seed-corn spoil,
Nor stones for bread reward your toil;
It shall spring up in fertile soil —

No drudging this in sordid things,
But service, round which glory rings
The praises of the King of Kings.

GOD'S POOR.

GOD! make us love thy poor starved ones the best.
In every soul some unused forces rest,
As soil hides seed, wrapt up in folded sleep,
Hidden in chilly mould, 'neath stones, down deep.

Love will uncover the cold soil, and wake
The tiny plant to struggle for Love's sake.
So doth the sun each wheat-spire call to birth,
Till, green with harvest hope, will shine the earth;
Nor shall the corn mildew, nor musty grow,
Dull, barren darkness, left alone to know.
Love shall keep wholesome what it first called forth,—
Sun of the South, and cool wind from the North;
Each seed that grows will multiply its kinds.
As a musician — patient teacher — finds
In some rude voice some pure and perfect note,
And builds and clears from that the whole rough throat
Each floating gossamer-seed of flower or plant
Helps the bare soul to cover up its want,
And sows anew, with natural sweet increase,
Till gracious wealth bids bare, rude penury cease.
O love! God's love give unto us the power
To wake these tiny buried seeds into full flower.
Wrapping our loving warmth round lifeless heart
Let us by righteous sacrifice to it impart.
As a half-frozen man is brought to life
By mercy's use of sacrificial knife;
Wrapt in warm skin of faithful dog or horse,
Through the chill body life begins to course:

If we our life-blood give, descend into the grave,
Perhaps we too some human soul may save;
Nay, our own souls to save, we oft must bleed;
God prunes us, slays us, as He sees we need.
To own lives truly, we must first them lose,
To hold, we give; to keep, we freely use.

TO L. C. H.

THE ANSWER.

You ask me why I cease to try
To shape my fancies into rhyme,
And wonder if so soon has past
The charm of cadence beating time.

You ask me if the artist's dream,
In shapely form so carved and fair,
Of chiseled thought, no longer seems
An aim to seek, a hope to dare.

I own no minstrel's harp, nor claim
One breath of that celestial fire,
Which kindled once, in embers lives,
And wakening, stirs to keen desire.

My songs were like the wild-wood notes
Of happy, chirping, spring-time birds;
Nor purpose had, nor method took,
In linking their spontaneous words.

I sang in Spring, and loved to hear
  My songs responsive please my mates ;
I lingered in the early flowers,
  And saw the daylight ope its gates.

So thrilling, in my youthful heart,
  Impulsive, outward poured my song —
Mere jocund nature without art
  Or culture wise, or effort long.

But now my Summer ripens fast,
  My mate and I have built our nest,
And there, in peace and safety hid,
  Our younglings twitter 'neath my breast.

And hindering cares for food and warmth
  Absorb the thought, and fill the hours ;
And busied with our little brood,
  I cease to talk about the flowers.

Such household centering of our life,
  In fibres vital with our own,
Makes love too tender e'en for speech,
  And silence proves its power alone.

So, though my heart is just as quick
  To see and feel and joy anew,
Sweet Summer, with its mellow light,
  Its noon-tide silence bringeth too :

As Summer's wiser, ripened skies
  Look not on restless, songful birds ;
In happy, rounded, love-rich lives,
  Die youthful, babbling, fluttering words.

HALF CONFIDENCES.

"HALF Confidences can you bear?" my friend
Asked. "Reserve, concealment seem disloyal
In love like ours. Great passions royal,
Like kings, wear open life, nor wish to lend
Or borrow veil or mask. A half light tires
The sight, which with keen native instinct pries
And peers, to penetrate mysterious disguise,
And nothing gains but weary, aching eyes."

I answered, "My faint sight blinks at noon-day fires,
Within the shadow of thy faithful breast
I lie as one at twilight hour doth rest.
Day is for labor; the golden sun brings
Responsibility; night is for sleep:
Between the two, soft blissful twilights creep.
The tender hour half light, half shadow flings,
And dew and coolness float upon its wings.
If I know nothing, I may cold silence keep,
Helpless in dreams. If I know all, the sums
Of such sad knowledge bring me angry pain.
Whole confidences were no real gain,
Could I not work for you with hand and brain,
Could I not mend and weave your broken thrums.
So, sweet, still live half-way beneath the rose,
Nor think thy every thought thou must disclose."

MORNING'S WISH.

WHAT message hast thou for me, dawning day?
What word of consolation or reproof,
Before thy last dim, lingering amber ray
Loses itself within the twilight gray,

And Night's dark pall spreads softly o'er my roof?
Dost thou bring sacred Peace, and Love's strong ark
Of safety, or thy timely woven woof
Twisted with threatening strands of mournful black,
Shall I thy fading light with sorrow mark?
Ah, day bring surely in thy steady track
The face I love! Then wilt thou nothing lack.
Rest and exhilaration in his presence lie,
And petty troubles in his dear smile die.
Ah, welcome me, dear day, with this surprise,
To sun myself in his clear, loving eyes.

THE ANGEL OF THE PRESENT.

My day, my new-born day, my sweet, clear day!
Thou smilest on my waking with bewildering light,
And every lesser faculty is lost in sight.
But as my senses take their wonted play,
I joy in thy possession, young, bright day;
How many of thy precious gifts are mine?
What argosies of thine sail to my bay,
Laden with golden fruit, and corn, and wine?
Say — wilt thou smile upon me, to the end
Of thy brief life? Wilt thou delicious stay,
And all thy retinue of thronging hours be gay,
With light and blossoms floating round their way?
Ah! but thou bringest in thy train, brave friend,
Duties as well as joys; and with this Angel, sent
Down from the high heaven's sunniest battlement,
We must wrestle hard for blessing, else, sad, stern,
And solemn day! thy memories we discern,
Which stony, frigid looks upon us turn.
Bless me, my day! I for thy blessing yearn.

A FAREWELL TO YOUTH.

O YOUTH! old friend, thy flowers drop fast
  Along life's dusty, beaten way;
Thy rosy crown, too bright to last,
  Fades with a dull and brown decay;

Nor blight nor frost cuts short its prime;
  Its buds fulfilled their years of bloom,
And dried and withered in full time;
  Their fading brings no thought of gloom.

For ripening fruit shall fill thy place,
  O flowers of youth, so fair and bright,
And nobler days and broader space
  Enrich our lives, enlarge our sight.

The beaten wheat from chaff we sift,
  And win the laurel in the strife;
Time's larger bounties are the gift
  And honest earning of our life.

The friends we own are proven true;
  The souls we love are grown more dear;
Old thoughts we keep, to chasten new,
  With judgment, mellow, keen, and clear.

We bless these wingèd years of gift—
  A home with love's unchanging gold,
The tender hands which burdens lift,
  The loving hearts which know no cold.

So, crown of youth, we put thee off;
  Yet not unmindful of thy charm,

We will not at thy fading scoff,
  Nor think thy daring day-dreams harm.

For hanging round these relics fair,
  Which Summer's warmth can ne'er illume,
Like echo of the springtide air,
  Lingers a breath of soft perfume.

Still grace with flowers the fair young brow,
  Still shine o'er eyes of liquid light,
And gladden those of us, who now
  Lay off thy wreaths of magic might.

LIFE'S HISTORY.

IMITATION OF GERMAN POETS.

"What is writ is History,
What is missed is mystery."

SEE how we walk amid shadows,
  Winding down a dim vista unknown,
Sometimes through meadow and woodland,
  Sometimes o'er mountain-top lone.

Sometimes the darkness thick brooding
  Shuts out every pencil of light;
The wrapping of cloudland eluding,
  Blue sky flashes forth sunny light.

Sometimes the leaves tell a story,
  Sometimes the birds sing a song,
Sometimes we see flowers in glory,
  And dew glitters all the day long.

Wanderers at will through the forest,
Pilgrims in search of a shrine,
Often in famine the sorest
Drops down for us manna divine ;

Bread that is finest and sweetest,
Draughts with a fresh flavor new,
Wild-fruit, of savor completest,
Bitter, but wholesomely true.

Waiting for us in the distance,
Beckons a sweet solemn form ;
Without any hope from resistance,
We press toward him, sunshine or storm.

Afar off we sometimes discern him,
His garments afloat in the air ;
As he cometh across the long level,
Our lips have time for a prayer.

Sometimes he starts from the silence
Of loneliest cave in the wood ;
Sometimes he leans o'er our slumbers,
And sleep is immortally good.

Whenever we reach his calm presence,
Comes a feeling of infinite peace ;
The tears leave our eyelids forever,
All burdens our shoulders release.

His keen eyes will clear up our tangles ;
His cool touch will lighten our brain,
Tone to music our discord and wrangles,
Into joy turn our passion and pain.

His mission is rest to our body,
  His message is peace without end,
His gifts make us wise without study;
  His name is Death — our truest friend.